

# STARBURST



DARTH VADER RETURNS WITH A NEW ALLY, BOBA FETT, IN

## THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK

PLUS: THE COSTUME DESIGNS IN FULL COLOUR

## THE NEW, IMPROVED FLASH GORDON

SPECIAL PROGRESS REPORT AND INTERVIEW WITH  
EX-DIRECTOR, NICOLAS ROEG

## BERTRAND TAVERNIER'S DEATHWATCH

GENESIS OF A SCIENCE FICTION FILM

## ANIMALYMPICS - AN ANIMATED FANTASY

## HARRYHAUSEN'S MYSTERIOUS ISLAND



# SATURN 3

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## THE FLASH GORDON 22 CHRONICLES: PART 2

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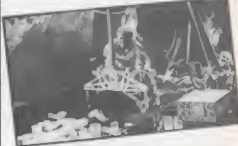
JOHN MOLLO, OSCAR-WINNING COSTUME DESIGNER FOR STAR WARS, CREATED THE UNIFORMS FOR THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK. STARBURST PRESENTS AN INTERVIEW WITH MOLLO PLUS A GALLERY OF HIS ORIGINAL COLOUR DESIGN DRAWINGS.

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# STARBURST LETTERS



## PORTRAITS OF LEILA

Re: Starburst 20. What? Only two photos of Louise Jameson? Are you people out of your minds?

Owen Carpanini,  
Hounslow.

*In all fairness, Owen, you have to admit that Louise Jameson was quite well represented in our Fantasy Females issue. Most of heroines depicted managed only one photo. But just to show how generous we are, here's another picture of Miss Jameson.*

## FOES TAKES A COATING

Who is this man John Coetes? And what have we done to deserve him? Questions that will be on many an angry lip if Foes goes on general release as you suggest in issue 21.

This unfortunate piece of nonsense escaped in Norwich a few months ago and I was unfortunate enough to pay to see it.

The poster outside proclaimed "A Close Encounter With . . . What?"

With boredom, that's what!

Only by force of will was I able to stay awake through all of its tedious 90 minutes, almost certainly in the mistaken belief that it could only get better as it went along. It didn't. My body just became more numb.

There were only two main effects as far as I could see; the UFO which hovered a lot, flew a bit, and did very little else, and the aliens themselves, pretty coloured lights that only came out at night because presumably it's much easier playing with pretty coloured lights in the dark.

The rest of the film was visually dull, lacked any form of pace and construction — any suspense meant to be present never materialised.

It is possible to imagine a director with the skill of, for example, Ridley Scott or Brian de Palma or even Spielberg, being able to make something out of this mess.

Unfortunately, it seems to be a one man ego trip. Actor, writer, director and effects man. A failure four times over!

Who is this man John Coetes?

For his sake I hope the cinema-going public never finds out.

Having Vagon poetry read to him would be too kind.

**FOES CAN PUT YOU TO SLEEP!** You have been warned.

Graham Parry,  
Norwich,  
Norfolk.

*If we didn't know better, Graham, we'd think you were an apprentice of John Bransan . . .*

## SECREY SERVILODE

**Starbold Twenty**, deep joy of the voluptuous fantasy meidenode and dangly if I may put it this way. Also deep thoughtous on Gerry Anderson's **Secret Service**. Oh yes. Indeedly, give it the deep impression of a total smackeroo burdy, but does the deep folly of omission of Stanley Unwold's other fantastical excur-

## THUNDERBIRDS ARE GO



I have just started buying your magazine Starburst and I am very impressed, particularly by the colour pictures. Heve I, by any chance missed an article on the tv classic Thunderbirds? If not are you likely to carry such an article in a future issue (with lots of colour pictures)? If not, why not?

P. Gardner,  
Leigh on Sea.

*Yes, Mr Gardner, we did feature some Thunderbirds material in our interview with special effects man Brian Johnson way back in Starburst 9. However, the definitive Thunderbirds feature has yet to appear within our pages. But you may be interested to know that resident Anderson expert, John Fleming, is working on a Fireball XL5 feature for inclusion in the very near future.*

sion; nemely being the deep joy of Small Faces conceptual alboid *Ogden's Nut Gone Flake* where that Unwold had the complicated role of narrative personage on Side 2, "Happiness Stan". Remember? Oh yes.

" . . . all time, some time deep joy of a full moon scintillated dangly in the heavenly bode, but now only half. Oh, blow your cool man, he do this deep thoughtous. What is the folly of this half disappearin' of the moony most? And so, gathering all behind in the hintermost, he ploddy ploddy forward into the

deep fundamold of the complicated forry to sortnet this one out, matey. Where at, man? Ha do this deep thoughtous. Where at, man? Oh deer."

So if you're all sitting comftibold two square on your botty I'll concluding with the wordage of the selfsame Mr Unwold no less: I hope your turnout was three quarter half as lovely as you wouldn't half and enjoy it. Stay cool, won't you?

Yours deep sincerity indeed.  
Lee Memdhem and Dangly,  
Chathambold,  
Kentlode.

*Deep joy, deep joy wells up from the odely bodely, Lee, on receivey your lettermost. Also adding deep joy on your enjoying John Flaminglade's Secrey Servilode article.*

## JOHN WILLIAMS GREATEST HITS

I have only one complaint about your magazine: it's simply not long enough! I always read through it in a day.

A few comments...

I was fascinated to read in *Things to Come* that George Romero (him of nasty zombia fame) was planning to do a film of Stephen King's literary horror masterpiece *The Stand*. Please keep us posted on any further developments.

I was please to see that *Superman The Movie* has turned out to be a phenomenal success, in my opinion a reward richly deserved. The film was a slick piece of sensational entertainment, and

generally I liked it better than *Star Wars*. But I have to admit that it was Chris Reeve's impressive performance which made the whole thing work.

Praise be to you for featuring an article on John Williams. It's high time something was said about this masterful composer who has contributed so much to films such as *Star Wars*, *Superman*, *Close Encounters*, et cetera: mind you I don't agree with Tony's view that his best score was Altman's *The Long Goodbye*. It can only be *Jaws* as far as I'm concerned.

I was also interested to hear about the re-issuing of a revised version of *Close Encounters*. I went to see the original six times and still hold that it is one of the greatest and most thought provoking science fiction movies ever to hit the screen.

Well, keep up the good work... oh and by the way tell John Brosnan to emigrate or the Trekkies will probably lynch him.

Stephen Woodward,  
Telford,  
Salop.

## DOWN THE HATCH



I must start by praising your magazine — it has great articles and pics. Though I don't often agree with your reviews, especially the ones pulling *Star Trek* and *Battlestar Galactica* down.

Please could you print a picture of the gorgeous Richard Hatch who portrays Captain Apollo in *Battlestar Galactica* and can you tell me his age?

Janette Goulsbra,  
Merket Rasen,  
Lincs.

To hear is to obey, Janette. *Richard Hatch* is, as near as we can ascertain, 34 years of age.

Incidentally, we do get a lot of letters containing questions on various aspects of science fiction and fantasy films. This prompts the question: would *Starburst* readers like to see a column devoted entirely to readers questions? Drop us a line with your vote and, better still, your questions.

# LORD OF THE RINGS II

I am writing to you as I am curious about a film which was supposed to have been released earlier this year. The film I refer to is *Lord of the Rings II*. I have been patiently waiting for this sequel to turn up for some time now and would like any information you can supply on it.

I would also like to congratulate you on your brilliant magazine.

Colin Dorman,  
Crawley,  
Sussex.

We spoke to Helen Robinson, press officer and all-round *Down Under* wonder at United Artists about *Lord of the Rings II*. She told us that the film was definitely in production though a release date has not been set yet. But rest assured, Colin, when we know, you'll know.



## CORRECTION

It was interesting to read, in the *Things to Come* column in *Starburst 21*, of the break-up of the Depatie-Freleng animation team. I wonder whether the Fritz Freleng to whom the article refers is any relation to the Fritz Freleng most of us have heard of!

Colin Davies,  
London W5.

Congratulations, Colin. You're the only person to notice that error, for which we apologise.

Send all comments to:

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London, NW5.**

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# THINGS TO COME

## BACK IN THE USA

It's been a couple of years since my last field trip to Film City. Not much has changed; not for the better, anyway. The place should be called Tellywood by rights, and the visiting British rockers are decidedly more punk in their look and wildly coloured appearance (more like extras from *Batlestar Galactica*) and try too hard to be foul-mannered. It was more fun here when Keith Moon was wrecking hotel three rooms...

Good, though, to see the famous Meek Sennett Hollywood sign back in the place atop his hill. The comedy director and Clark Arnel first erected it in 1923, long before the real town arrived, certainly before the days of City Hall, the freeways, when Musso and Franks, the oldest restaurant in town was but four... By the late 50s, the sign was in a bad way. The original letters were crumbling — mirroring Hollywood itself as the tv craze began. By 1978, nobody much wanted to know about the old eyesore. Except Roger Corman's nuts — Joe Dante and Allen Arkush — making *Hollywood Boulevard*. They had one of the giant, ancient letters topple over and make beefburger out of poor Mary Woronow. Great scene!

But in Hollywood itself the old sign was being used in the streets down below as a smog-tester. If you could read what was left of the sign, the weather was fine; if not, the smog was drifting across... or the rest of the letters had fallen down. And so, it was officially decided to get rid of it. That's when Hollywood — or *Playboy* magazine — finally rushed to the rescue. Tourists were beginning to come in by the Freddie Laker Skytrainful. It was time to be proud of the old town again, clean it up, put on a happy face. Nine charitable beings dug into their wallets and came up with the loot to erect a new set of HOLLYWOOD letters. Few of them were famous... fewer still had even a remote connection with movies. Gene Autry, the old-time singing cowpoke, was the only star involved — he paid for the second L, for instance. Hugh Hefner, Chief Bunny at *Playboy*, stumped up for the Y ('Y not?' he said), and Andy Williams, none too surprisingly, supplied the W. Warners Brothers (the disc division, not the movie or tv side) paid for one O and Alice Cooper, of all people, the other O... and so on. Now, like Film City, the sign is looking good. And it's still the best way, down on the streets, to check the smog quotient.

But that's enough of the weather forecast. Now for the real news from the hills of Beverly, the canyons of Coldwater and Laurel, and the film and tv studios, which are now mainly to be found in small suburbs named after them — Universal City, Century City — built up from the old back lots they sold off to remain in business in the 60s when times were hard, and some studio bosses didn't know where their next million was coming from. Times are now



## CANNON FIRE

Two of the revitalised Cannon Group's big push of movies for the marketplace of the 33rd festival. *Above*: Malcolm Stoddard (the Beeb's Charles Darwin) with angelic blonde kiddy Wilhelmina Green in the British-made shocker, *The Godsend*, directed by Gabrielle Beaumont from her actor-husband Olaf Polley's script. *Right*: Klaus Kinski with Donna Wilkes in David Paulson's *Murder By Mail*, formerly *Moulded To Murder*... which doesn't quite have the same ring, somehow.



so good that Warner Brothers could afford 35-million dollars to buy up the old Samuel Goldwyn studio — and beat 20th Century-Fox to the punch. Warners needed extra studio space... and, more important, room for a video-tape plant. Film City is fast becoming Tape City...

## CONNOR SPLITS

Kevin Connor has joined the burgeoning lists of British directors working here. After six consecutive movies in partnership with

producer John Dark — all the way from 1973's *From Beyond the Grave* through *The Land Time Forgot*, *At the Earth's Core*, *The People That Time Forgot*, *Warlords of Atlantis* to last year's *Arabian Adventure* — he's shocking his Hollywood debut on the streets of L.A. His choice of movie is a gruesome chiller, *Motel Hell*... a kind of Norman Bates Lives number. The stars include old-timer Rory Calhoun, Nancy Persons and witty screenwriter George Axelrod's daughter, Nina. Kevin's new producer is Herb Jeffre, the former New York literary agent who brought Clint Eastwood back to Hollywood from his spaghetti Westerns, and is better known to the likes of us for producing Donald Cammell's masterly *Demon Seed* and Nicholas Meyer's wonderful *Time After Time*.

Dur Kev is in good company, therefore. He always has been since going into films straight from school in 1955. He started out as a cutting-room assistant, became sound editor on Joe Strick's *Ulysses* and Tony Richardson's *Charge of the Light Brigade* and rose to fully fledged editor for Richard Attenborough's *DH! What A Lovely War*. He also edited Peter Sellers' *The Magic Christian*; *Bloomfield*, directed by Richard Harris, Attenborough's *Young Winston* and Alec Guinness' unfortunate



trip as Hitler in *The Last Ten Days*. In fact, it was while delivering a Young Winston print to producer Carl Foreman at Heathrow, that Kevin bought himself a copy of R. Chetwyn-Hayes' short stories at a bookstall, and began musing on the notion of turning them into half-hour tv scripts. Enter John Dark . . . and we know the rest.

## LUCASANIMATION

George Lucas, connected it seems with just about every movie effort on either side of the big pond just now, is beating pal Spielberg into the animation business. They are, of course, both animation freaks, particularly where Duck Dodgers in the 24th Century is concerned. Now George is into his own animated feature, *Twice Upon A Time*, to be made for the new company of the former production chief of 20th Century-Fox, Alan Ladd Jr — the man who gave the initial go-ahead to a little idea called *Star Wars*. As with most of his work



these days, George will be the executive producer only of the project, to be produced and directed by another of his San Francisco buddies, John Korty, from an original script and story. Shooting starts in July and Warner Brothers hope to release the result within a year . . . which makes it a very rapid piece of movie-cartooning indeed.

George Lucas, meantime, has moved fully returned to the Ladd fold. He's become a consultant with Alan's Ladd Company on various other projects in the pipeline. Whatever they are, you'll read it here first . . .

## VONNEGUT TRIP

Move over George — the youngest writer-producer-director in town, Steven Paul, is coming on strong. Just 21, when he did the triple chores on *Falling In Love Again*, young Paul has three more movies in the works . . . including the long awaited big screen version of Kurt Vonnegut Jr's *Slapstick*. Ho hum. The book came out in 1976; Paul was only 18 when he bought an option on the movie rights, though leaving Vonnegut full script and director approval. Well, it's panned out pretty

neetly. Vonnegut scripted his own book — the first time he's ever done that. Paul loves the screenplay, and Vonnegut loves Paul's first film, and has asked him to direct *Slapstick*. Shooting starts this winter.

## HUXLEY'S WORLD

Worst news from Tellywood — still no prime-time television date settled for Universal and NBC's four-hour adaptation of Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*. The mini-series (surely the most intelligent project ever mounted by the land of papvision) was directed by Burt Brinkerhoff in 1978. His stars suitably included Kair Dullea from 2001, Bud Cort, Kristofer Tabori and Marcia Strassman. 'Twould appear the reason for the unprecedented delay in putting Huxley on-screen is that the show is too good!

Producer Jacqueline Babbin — she made Sally Field's mesterly tele-flick *Sybil* — doesn't even know if *Brave New World* will be three or four hours if and whenever it is networked. Huxley's brave new world is meeting Tellyland's far from brave tv executives, with a vengeance. Universal Pictures have the rights to his book since it first came out in 1932 — and plainly never knew what to do with it. Ms Babbin found it in the script department, felt it still had plenty to say, had Robert E. Thompson handle the script and got the go-ahead from the powers that be in Universal's black tower . . . and from NBC's Paul Klein. But now NBC don't know what to do with it either. Paul Klein was sacked by the new NBC head, fearless Fred Silverman — the man who helped invent jigglevision with *Charlie Angel's*, *Three's Company* and *suchlike*. On the other hand, it was Silverman who was also responsible for something as revolutionary on the American tube as *Roots*, so why's he dragging his feet

over Huxley? The fact that it wasn't his idea, apparently!

The reason, alas, is petently obvious. The book is a literary classic of the highest order, and by all accounts Jacqueline Babbin and her production designer Tom H. John, have matched it in every way. The result, therefore, is the kind of tv that will stimulate the mind, not just the eye with Cheryl Ladd or Suzanne Sommer's jiggling. The fate of *Brave New World* — which had its Merch air-date cancelled at the last minute — is all to redolent with what's wrong in American television today, where most programming is designed to fill in the spaces — or jiggle — inbetween the all-important icons, also known as the commercials. (And they are, I might add, some of the most amateur commercials you've ever seen in your life).

## CORMAN IN SPACE

A little late in the day, but no matter, Roger Corman has returned to space with his new World company's most expensive movie — *Battle Beyond the Stars*. Despite last minute thoughts on the matter, he is not directing however. That chore goes to his aerial man on his 72nd project, Von Richtofen and Brown (1971), Jimmy Murskani. *The Waltons'* John-Boy, Richard Thomas, heads the cast as Corman's version of Luke Skywalker — a young galactic warrior named Shad. He is called upon by the peaceful inhabitants of the Akir planet to defend their shores (or whatever it is they have up there) when threatened by great planet-conqueror Sador. With George Peppard as Sador, and young Shad nipping around like a mad thing picking up other mercenaries to join his raggedy army, this Corman venture sounds like yet another re-make of *Seven Samurai* to

## THE VOICE

She's heard but never seen each week in Quinn Martin's 007 rip-off series on London Weekend: *A Man Called Siona*. She's the voice of Effie the know-all computer in Robert Conrad's headquarters. She sounds rather better — audio-erotic is the word — than the toy-like 'puters in *Wonder Woman*. And as this nostalgic clip from her biggest film success — *The Duke's El Dorado*, circa 1965 — proves, she most certainly looks better than the owners of the other top robotic voices in movies . . . Tony Daniels' 3PO; Robert Vaughn's Proteus IV in Donald Cammell's *Demon Seed*; Mel Blanc's Twiki in *Buck Rogers*; and, of course, Douglas Robin's Hal in Kubrick's 2001. No wonder Michele's robot sounds so effective . . . just look where it's been.



# THINGS TO COME

me . . . Even more so now I hear that Robert Vaughn, from the original *Magnificent Seven* remake of Kurosawa, is also involved.

Behind the scenes, Ken Jones, of the Jet Propulsion Laboratory, where he worked on the Mars Lander, is Corman's choice as overall technical adviser and special-effects consultant. The actual effects, including all miniatures, are in the hands of Dennis Skotak and George Dodge, with Chuck Comisky in charge of special photographic miniatures. Hope the . . . force? . . . goes with 'em.

## NEW CORMAN

Jolly Roger Corman, unrepentant still about closing down his London film office, is back where he belongs with his latest Stateside release. Humanoids from the Deep nostalgically recalls Corman's second production, *Monster from the Ocean Floor* (1954). It's brasher of course, considerably more costly, even by Roger's penny-pinching standards, and erotic enough to win an X certificate rating in Britain without any doubt at all. Barbara Peters, up from cutting Corman and directing for his producer wife, Julie, is officially credited as director, but a digit or two of Corman is



evident in the obviously inserted footage. There's a lot wrong with the film, but it moves fast enough to stop you dwelling too much on it, and launches one back into the 1950s style of monsters from black lagoons and suchlike. Minus the heavy-handed ecological message which John Frankenheimer bored us all with in *Prophecy*.

Vic Morrow is the baddy. Doug McClure, from the Kevin Connor/John Dark series in

Britain — is the hero, of course. And Ann Turkel, the erstwhile Mrs Richard Harris, is the looker. (And then some). Rob Bottin designed the humanoids. Never mind, Rob. You've time to get 'em right. Corman is talking to Ms Turkel for a sequel to be shot and released before the end of the year . . .

## ... & OLD CORMAN

A long-lost slice of pure Cormanie has been unearthed and put on release here, at the thin end of a double-bill programme, not by Corman's New World Pictures but by ABC Pictures International. Which tends to explain all. Target: Harry was shot a dozen years ago as *What's In It For Harry* for the ABC-TV network. The tv executives went puce when they saw it. Too violent! They've been sitting on it ever since . . . or until someone somewhere pointed out there was money to be had from the last film Roger Corman directed before setting up New World and turning full-time producer in 1971. (Not that you'd know this from today's credits: "directed by Henry Neill", the big one reads). Brother Gene produced the film, and years later apparently added a couple of nude scenes to try and get a



## THE WICKER MAN

Best news I heard all week in LA was that Christopher Lee has finally won his six-year-old battle to get a decent American release for his own favourite among his innumerable British movies, *The Wicker Man*. Together with

director Robin Hardy, Chris helped arrange a deal with Abraxas Films, the film opened up well in New York with a whole shoal of dates to follow. Well, it's about time . . . Shot in 1974, *The Wicker Man* has probably the most

chequered history of any British feature since Alexander Korda cancelled *Claudius* in 1936. It was originally made in Britain by British Lion, which was then swallowed live by the show biz octopus called EMI, and *Wicker* became trundled around and about always as a second feature, hacked to ribbons by its first American buyer, taken over by Warner Brothers which dumped it after a few drive-in dates and it has been gathering dust on a variety of shelves ever since. America's *Cinefantastique* magazine did a remarkable reportage job some years back on the film's history — alleging among other revelations, that the film's original negative had been buried under a British motorway!

Despite the cold shoulder from both Britain and the States, the film has played — and rather successfully, too — in about 17 other countries. Only now is it getting the kind of screenings it deserves in the Americas. When it first arrived in the States, Robin Hardy says it was "hatched to pieces with scenes thrown away and others taken out of sequence." With the original negative missing, I gather Roger Corman was able to come to the rescue. He had considered buying it once, and somehow had been left with a mint print on his shelf. Whoever supplied the missing pieces, or proved the guide as to where they should go, *The Wicker Man* is back in good health — and long may it remain that way. It has a cult following waiting to see it . . . not to mention a few others more attracted by the sequences where the notorious Britt Ekland is extensively nude.

release for the film as *How To Make It . . .* an unfortunate title in the circumstances.

The films are a bit of a steel from The Maltese Falcon (but how many films haven't been?) with Vic Morrow, from the Humanoids (above) as the Bogglesome hero looking after No 1 in Monte Carlo and Istanbul. Victor Buono more than fills in for Sidney Greenstreet, with Suzanne Pleshette as a Mery Astor clone. Corman himself is seen in some scenes, but the rest of the casting is quite mind-boggling. I mean are you ready for Cesar Romero, Charlotte Rempling . . . and Stanley Holloway? But like any Corman movie, it's intriguing and I hope we get to see it in Britain. It may be a cheap, but it's not cheap 'n' nasty.

# MAGIC

So there I was one day – actually, it was around 1 am – watching over the sleeping family and the Universal tv version of *Mandrake the Magician* being re-run for the umpteenth time on NBC, currently the one major network that seems to have given up the ghost... And the very next day, well, it was the same morning really I suppose, I'm being informed of a brand new movie version planned for the 46-year-old strip. Obviously, the guys at King Features Syndicate had caught the Universal travesty as well. They've sold the *Mandrake* movie-rights – or, as they say here, the rights to the movie-movie – to France, not America.

Producer Eric Rochat's *Peris* combine Yang Films won the deal and Rochat was already in L.A. hunting up some stars before taking off on a location trek across America—which is one sure way to get to see all the country and be paid for it, at the same time. Rochat intends shooting his *Mandrake* in the United States, though I suspect his biggest audience will be back home. These days, Lee Falk's *Mandrake the Magician* strip appears in upwards of 200 papers around the world. Nowhere can it be more popular than in France. I look forward to a superior production.

## THE WINNER



## MORE MUMMIES

Don't know you've noticed, but *The Mummy* is back in fashion . . . Two films, based in Britain, but dollar (and indeed in one case, teller-doll) backed all the way, have dug up the old archaeological-dig dreme genre – Charlton Heston in *The Awakening*, Raymond Burr in the apparently curse-riddled *Curse of King Tut's Tomb*. Add one more. Hollywood expatriate producer in Italy, Frank Agrema, has returned home to set up *Dawn of the Mummy* – which like the rest will also locate in Egypt. It sounds the smallest of the three Mums, but could turn out the best. Agrema has signed Mario Bava to direct . . .

## COMICS RULE

This Mandreka news now means some 200-million-dollars are being levished on thirteen movies about comic-book heroes. You've read about most of them in this column, so go on—name all of them. And yes, I mean movie-movies, none of the tele-flicks. Answers below.

## BURT'S PIRATES?

Not rumormongers: hereabouts is that Burt Reynolds is well in the running to take the title role in the 14-million dollar version of the Terry and the Pirates strip. He's long been interested in the idea. Trouble is he's about the busiest male star in Hollywood, so producers Clarence Greene and Russell Rouse may have to look elsewhere. Particularly, as they intend to start shooting in Hong Kong come October. I doubt if Reynolds will be free of his commitments by then. Not that he's ever "free"; he's also about the most expensive star in town, this side of Brando and McQueen. The Chicago Tribune and New York News syndicate think the script of the Terry-film is so good, they want to resurrect the strip... unseen in the funnies since 1973.

(Okay, Mandreka end now Terry, that's two

comic-strips into films, just eleven more to find. Answers are still below . . .)

## HOLLYWOOD CUTTINGS

The first leader of the Mission Impossible team, Steven Hill (that's before Peter Graves took the show over) is back in movie with *The Perfect Circle* . . . Another ex-Bond girl, Maude Adams, from *The Man with the Golden Gun*, joins Bruce Dern in his *Tattoo* shop in New Jersey . . . tv's *Mindy*, aka Pam Dawbar, is spending her *Mork* vacation by hosting a tv special about solar energy, *Harnessing The Sun* . . .

Spielberg's 1941 seems to be doing better in Europe than in the States, smashing box-office records in West Germany and Sweden. That doesn't stop Chevy Chase strolling around Beverly Hills with a lapel badge bemoaning the fate of his old tv mate in the film. It reads: John Balushi 1949-1941. . .

## CANNES '80

... is my next stop, which could explain why our esteemed Editor Alan (which one is P.J. Soles?) McKenzie is a trifle puce. It's not the expenses that worry him (I), but the fact that his particular favourite fantasy lady, Carolina Munro, will be back waltzing along the Croisette. She's in a new Cannes-bound chiller called *Maniac* — executive produced by hubby Judd Hamilton. Last year, Caroline jetted into Cannes to announce Cannon's take-over of Lewis Coates (aka Luigi Cozzi) and his *Startrash* characters for *Star Riders* (Starburst 12). Since when — zilch! A big fat zero. Until she started shooting *Maniac* in November — 'it'll scare the living daylight out of you', promises director William Lustig. Just to measure of that, he hired Romero's make-up man, Tom Savin. Very gruesome then? "I don't think the public is squeamish anymore," comments Lustig. "We're not selling any messages. It's a 91-minute roller-coaster ride and our theory is we're going with public taste."

## COMIC BOOK FILM QUIZ ANSWER

The thirteen films about comic-book heroes, in one stage of production or another as of now: Superman II (Chris Reeve); Flash Gordon (Sam Jones); Popeye (Robin Williams); The Wizard of Id (Paul Williams...ugh!). Conan The Barbarian (Arnold Schwarzenegger); Ugh!; Terry O'Quinn (removed from Star Trek: Voyager); Star Trek: Voyager (Jeri Ryan); Star Trek: Next Generation (Burt Reynolds); Star Trek: Enterprise (Scott Bakula); Star Trek: Voyager (Jeri Ryan); Star Trek: Voyager (Jeri Ryan); Star Trek: Voyager (Jeri Ryan).

If you've got me all right, drop into the nearest offices sometime and collect your prize. The contents of my wastebasket — or indeed, Alan Mickenzies'. Oh yes, we do offer you a choice. [Schwarzenegger]

# THE LONG WEEKEND

A Starburst Film Review by John Brosnan

Since the Europeans first settled in Australia some 200 years ago they've spent a lot of time and effort since trying to pretend they're living anywhere in the world but Australia. As most of the early settlers came from England it was that country they tried to recreate Down Under, transplanting English architecture, gardens and culture into an environment where none of these things fitted easily. It's due to this tradition, which still persists, that a lot of Australians, including yours truly, grow up feeling somewhat alienated from their surroundings. That old cliché about Christmas in Australia is a true one — it does feel strange eating a hot Christmas dinner surrounded by cards depicting wintery landscapes while outside the temperature has climbed to a 100 degrees and you are being serenaded by a massed choir of a million hungry blow flies as they try to batter their way in through the wire screens and join the feast...

This feeling that Europeans don't belong in Australia — that there's something basically weird about the place — has been reflected in several Australian movies recently, particularly the films of Peter Weir, *Picnic At Hanging Rock* and *The Last Wave*. Now comes another movie with the same theme but whereas in those two movies the threat was suggested rather than shown, in *The Long Weekend* the Australian landscape and fauna quite openly wreaks a graphic and terrifying revenge on the European interloper. The result is one of the best horror films I've seen in a while.

It begins with a young married couple heading off for a weekend camping trip at some remote beach (so remote even the locals haven't heard of it). Their marriage is obviously under some strain and she doesn't even want to go on the trip, not sharing her husband's enthusiasm for roughing it (an attitude I entirely sympathise with).

Even before the trip gets underway there are hints that All Is Not Right, the main one being a background news bulletin about white cockatoos (parrots) attacking the inhabitants of a country town. But the trouble really starts when



they're driving through the bush and their car hits and kills a kangaroo. Just as the killing of the albatross sealed the fate of the Ancient Mariner so this blind act of uncaring violence seals the fate of the couple in the car.

First they get lost on the bush track leading to the beach, passing the same tree — marked with an arrow — again and again until they are forced to stop and spend the night parked on the track. In the morning however they find that the track reaches the beach just a few yards past that particular tree. The wife points out that there was no way they could have driven round in circles but the husband ignores the supernatural implications and shrugs it all off, determined to enjoy himself.

His main source of enjoyment is to shoot at everything in the vicinity that moves, and with every shot he fires, and with every empty beer can he hurls into the bush, we sense that he is driving further nails into his own coffin. Then the manifestations begin — a spear gun fires by itself, narrowly missing the girl, a frozen chicken starts to rot even before it's thawed, there are strange crying sounds from the bush, the man is attacked by an eagle and when he goes

swimming he is shadowed by a large, dark shape in the water.

He shoots the thing in the water, presuming it to be a shark. But later a pathetic, bullet-riddled sea-cow crawls up onto the beach and dies. Or at least it seems to — but the thing won't stay dead and keeps trying to crawl up the beach towards their camp, even after being buried...

Then comes the discovery of the other camp at the opposite end of the beach. What they find there finally convinces them of the full horror of their situation. But by then it's too late. As the exterior tensions have built up around them so too have the inner tensions created by their failing marriage. Finally their relationship breaks down completely and they attempt to go their separate ways, but by doing so totally expose themselves to the malign force that's after them... I found the last 20 or so minutes of the movie quite the most harrowing I've sat through for some time. The tension is unrelenting and the double-surprise ending suitably shattering (though I anticipated part of it, as most viewers probably will).

The director, Colin Eggleston, is a new name to me but on the basis of this picture alone one can see he's a film maker of considerable talent. It's one thing to make a gloomy old house, or a cavernous space ship, as in *Alien*, seem threatening, but to make a sunlit beach seem similarly frightening calls for real skill and ingenuity.

I recommend *The Long Weekend* whole-heartedly. It's an Australian movie that even people who don't normally like Australian movies will enjoy.



Top: Marcie (Briony Behets) lends Peter (John Hargreaves) a helping hand after he has narrowly escaped a menacing object in the sea.  
Right: Battered and bleeding, Peter makes a desperate bid for escape from the forces that surround him.

# Maya Merchandising

This is a list of a very few of the back-issue magazines we have in stock. For our full list with Future Life, Fangaoria, Fantastic Films, Cinematic, Famous Monsters of Filmland, Halls of Horror, etc. just send us a stamped, self-addressed envelope. Our address together with ordering instructions and information is in our advertisement on page 41 of this issue.

**T.V. Sci-Fi Monthly**, March 1954; 3 x 11 1/2" tabloid with plenty of full colour pin-ups

**1. Star Trek**: aliens of Space 1999; the boyhood of Mr Spock; making the Six Million Dollar Man; Planet of the Apes; the Daleks; USS Enterprise.

**2. Star Trek**: an interview with Gene Roddenberry; Pon-Farr (the Vulcan mating cycle); Space 1999 — second series; Six Million Dollar Man; Flash Gordon; plans of the USS Enterprise.

**3. Aliens of Star Trek**: Klingons & Romulans; Space 1999 spfx — Brian Johnson; Bionic Woman; Rollerball

**4. Star Trek**: the James T. Kirk story; Doctor Who; bridge plans of the USS Enterprise

**5. Star Trek**: interview with William Shatner; Doctor Who — interview with Tom Baker; Six Million Dollar Man; at weapons; the crew of the USS Enterprise (Bones & Scotty).

**6. Space 1999** — interview with Martin Landau; Dan Dera, the crew of the USS Enterprise Part II (Uhura & Chekov).

**7. Star Trek** — interview with Leonard Nimoy; animated st: UFO: time travel, the crew of the USS Enterprise Part III (Chekov).

**8. Interview with Gerry Anderson**; Doctor Who; Star Trek — an A-Z; Bionic Woman; 2001; A Space Odyssey.

## STARBURST

**1. The writers of Star Trek**: Star Wars — Buccaneers of Space, Pass the Book (fiction by Harry Harrison); the making of Star Wars plus comic strips by Dave Gibbons and Brian Lewis and Jeff Hawk in 'Here Be Tygers' by Sydney Jordan.

**2. Star Wars** — interview with Anthony (C-3PO) Daniels; Spiderman on the big screen; Ray Bradbury on Close Encounters of the Third Kind; Space Cruiser; The Prisoner; Wizards; 'Here Be Tygers' Part II plus comic strip by Jim Starlin.

**3. Close Encounters of the Third Kind**; Quark; Star Wars — interview with Harrison Ford; Star Trek — the movie; Logan's Run; CE3K spfx; Superman the Movie.

**4. Battletar Galactica**; Superman the Movie spfx — interviews Roy Fed; Derek Medings & Coin Chivers; Invasion of the Body Snatchers (1956) robots of the movies; Douglas Trumbull interview Part III.

**5. Invasion of the Body Snatchers (1978)**; Alien; Damnation Alley; The Manitou; interview with Gerry Anderson, Superman II, This Island Earth; The Empire Strikes Back.

**6. Lord of the Rings**; Tales of the Unexpected; interview with Brian Johnson; Forbidden Planet; Invasion of the Body Snatchers (1979) — interview with director Philip Kaufman; Salvage One; The Invisible Boy.

**10. Doctor Who** — interview with Tom Baker; aliens in the movies; Philip Kaufman interview Part II on Star Trek; The Motion Picture; sf film posters; Lost in Space; The Shape of Things to Come.

**11. Things to Come**; Lord of the Rings; Dera Meddings interview; The Humanoid — Star Trek; The Motion Picture — Parsa Khambatta interview; Nostradamus (1979).

**12. The Humanoid** — Richard Kirk interview; The Spaceman and King Arthur; The Thing; robots in the movies; The Space Movie; Derek Meddings interview Part II (Moonraker); The China Syndrome.

**13. Buck Rogers in the 25th Century**; Moonraker; The Avengers; the making of Alien; The Omega Man; Space 1999 production designs — Keith Wilson interview; Invaders from Mars.

**14. Alien**; The Avengers Part II; The Time Machine; Doctor Who spfx — interview with Tony Harlow; Fantasy film series.

**15. Roger Dicken interview**; Quatarasms; Sapphira and Steel; Doctor Who; The Day the Earth Stood Still; Hitch-Hiker's Guide to the Galaxy; fantasy film series Part II.

**16. Alien** — Nor Cobb interview; UFO; Quatarasms — interview with Nigel Kneale; The Black Hole; Puffin of the Apes (and the sequels); Kronos; a history of TV sf.

**17. Star Trek: The Motion Picture**; Alien — Dan O'Bannon interview; The Final Countdown; BBC spfx models — Mat Irvine interview; sf on TV Part II; Starburst Fantasy Film Awards; Japanese animated sf.

**18. Meteor** — interview with executive producer Sandy Howard; Zombi: Dawn of the Dead; Blaka's 7 the new Liberator crew — Paul Darrow, Jan Chappell, Michael Keating, Steven Pacey, Joetta Simon, Peter Tuddenham — interviewed also producer David Matoney; cinema aliens: A boy and His Dog; Project UFO; the films of George Pal.

**19. Star Trek: The Motion Picture**; Doctor Who — Tom Baker and producer Graham Williams interview; Meteor — interview with episode guide; Part II; Land of the Giants; Saturn 3; Dan O'Bannon on Alien; The Black Hole; Fantastic Voyage.

**20. Special fantasy female pin-up issue**; 20,000 Leagues Under the Sea; Star Trek: The Motion Picture; The Black Hole; The Day Time Ended; Blaka's 7 spfx; The Secret Service with Stanley Unwin interview; The Outer Limits.

**21. The Brood**; Zombi Flash-Eaters; BBC spfx — Ian Scoones interview; Mission Galactica; The Cylon Attack; Foes; The Black Hole — Peter Ellenhorn, Mazman Khan and Gary Nelson interview; The Tomorrow Man; The Outer Limits Part II; the art of movie miniatures; the films of Jules Verne.

## STARLOG

**1. The Bionic Woman**; Space 1999; King Kong (1933 & 1976); Squirrel; Star Trek with episode guide and profiles of Leonard Nimoy & William Shatner.

**2. Star Trek with Gene Roddenberry profile**; Logan's Run; The War of the Worlds; Space 1999 with first season and first 12 second season episode guide; Flash Gordon with chapter guide to the first serial; superheros on the screen.

**3. 40 of films made for TV**; 75 years of movie and TV spaceflight; Space 1999 episode guide Part II; Six Million Dollar Man; Star Trek — the biennial con'.

**4. Invaders from Mars**; 3-0 of films with movie guide; Six Million Dollar Man/Bionic Woman — Richard Anderson interview; Arena (Frederic Brown's story plus Star Trek stills); Space 1999 — Nick Tate interview; The Outer Limits with episode guide.

**5. 3-D spectacular — the history & techniques**; Don Dixon (space artist) interview; UFO with episode guide; Space 1999 episode guide Part III.

**6. the making of Destination Moon**; Fantastic Journey with cast & crew interviews; the animated Star Trek spfx.

**7. Star Wars**; Space 1999 — Eagle blueprints; Alan Scott lco-author Star Trek movie interview; National Air & Space Museum; Rocketship X-M spfx Part II.

**8. The Fly**; Harlan Ellison interview; Star Wars; Saturday morning TV fantasy with show guide; spfx Part III — model animation (Ray Harryhausen).

**9. Special TV issue**: Man from Atlantis — Pat Duffy interview; Gerry Anderson interview; Wonder Woman — Lynda Carter interview; Logan's Run — producers Ivan Goff & Ben Roberts interview; William Shatner interview; 1949-1959 — the golden age of TV sf; Fantastic Journey — Jared Martin interview plus episode guide; spfx Part IV — Star Wars portfolio.

**10. Close Encounters of the Third Kind**; Space Academy; Space 1999 set designs; George Pal; Ray Harryhausen & Ralph Bakshi interview; spfx Part V.

**11. The Prisoner with episode guide**; Quark; The Incredible Shrinking Man; Close Encounters of the Third Kind; Superman the Movie; sf comics; spfx Part V.

**12. Laserblast**; Star Trek — Gene Roddenberry interview; Starship Invasion; Close Encounters of the Third Kind; Invasion of the Body Snatchers (1978); The Time Machine; spfx Part VII.

**13. The Manitou**; Star Wars — Dave Prowse interview; The Return of Captain Nemo; Walt Disney's space films; Logan's Run with episode guide; Forrest J Ackerman interview; Close Encounters of the Third Kind; Invasion of the Body Snatchers (1978); The Time Machine; spfx Part VIII.

**14. stop-motion animation — Jim Danforth interview**; The Incredible Mating Man; Virgil Finlay's fantasy art; Space 1999 spfx; Project UFO with producer Colonel William T. Coleman interview; Capricorn One; spfx Part IX — P.S. Elinshaw (Star Wars matta pa matta) interview.

**15. Superman the Movie with director Richard Donner interview**; Thongor in the Valley of the Demons; The Twilight Zone; Close Encounters of the Third Kind; Star Wars; The Fury; This Island Earth; spfx Part X.

**16. Alan Dean Foster interview**; Invasion of the Body Snatchers (1978) — director Philip Kaufman interview; the films of Part I Gordon; Fantastic Voyage; Buck Rogers — Robert McCall's pre-production designs; The Invaders with episode guide; spfx Part XI — superman-analogy/Gerry Anderson.

**17. Close Encounters of the Third Kind — Steven Spielberg interview**; Ralph McQuarrie interview with portfolio and giant 21" x 16" full colour Battletar Galactica pull-out poster; Star Trek: The Motion Picture; Joe Haldeman interview; superheros on TV; spfx Part XII.

**18. The Empire Strikes Back — producer Gary Kurtz interview**; Battletar Galactica — Dick Benedict & Richard Hatch interviews; Dr. Jekyll & Mr. Hyde; The Boys from Brazil; Stella Star — actor David Hasselhoff interview; Pranh; spfx Part XIII.

**19. Buck Rogers in the 25th Century — Gil Gerard interview**; Battletar Galactica — Maren Jensen interview; Invasion of the Body Snatchers (1978); The Lord of the Rings — Ralph Bakshi interview; Roger Combs interview; Star Wars TV special; Superman the Movie; spfx Part XIV — creating & filming CE3K's mothsmath.

**20. Buck Rogers**; Jason of Star Command; Mork & Mandy — Pam Dawber interview; Superman the Movie; Kirk Alyn interview; build your own spaceship; spfx Part XV.

**21. Star Wars — Mark Hamill interview**; Battletar Galactica — building the bridge; Superman the Movie; Lost in Space with episode guide; Night of the Living Dead/Martin — director George A. Romero interview; Buck Rogers — the movie; sf models; spfx Part XVI.

**22. Moonraker**; Battletar Galactica — Lorne Greene & Noah Hathaway interviews; Alien & Veronica Cartwright; the aliens of Star Trek: The Motion Picture; Don Matz' sf art; Brave New World; Vortex; The Shape of Things to Come; spfx Part XVII.

**23. Alien with Dan O'Bannon interview**; Monsumat; Doctor Who with episode guide; The Shape of Things to Come spfx; Star Wars — Dave Prowse interview; The Day the Earth Stood Still; spfx Part XVIII.

**24. Special anniversary issue**: Index to first 34 issues; William Shatner & Leonard Nimoy interviews; UFOs; sf on radio; Moonraker; Cry of Chihlu; Alien — Co-producer Walter Hill interview; Star Wars; Close Encounters of the Third Kind; retrospectives — 2001 to the Last Wave & Destination: Moon to The Time Machine; Star Trek Battletar Galactica; Space 1999; TV sf from Lost in Space to The Incredible Hulk; spfx.

**25. Ray Bradbury interview**; The Thing (from Another World) spfx; Star Trek: The Motion Picture production illustrations — interview with Mike Minor also Brad Price on lighting the Enterprise; Alien; sf sculpture; sf & pinball machines; spfx Part XIX.

**26. Don Dixon — space artist**; Alien — director Ridley Scott & concept artist H. Giger interview; The First Men in the Moon; sf sculptures; The Day after Tomorrow; Meteor — actor Bo Brundin interview; sf sculpture; Buck Rogers collectibles; sf costume design.

**27. Dune**; animated sf; The Martian Chronicles; Battletar Galactica with episode guide; The Black Hole; Star Trek: The Motion Picture model makers; Time after Time — director Nicholas Meyer interview; Urshurak; spfx Part XXI — Alien.

**28. Buck Rogers in the 25th Century**; Battletar Galactica with Universal Studios also Herb Jefferson Jr interview; Don Post interview; Wonder Woman with episode guide; The Incredible Hulk — Lou Farnsworth interview; Vanux; spfx Part XXII — Les Bowie.

**29. Meteor — producer Ted Parvin interview**; Buck Rogers — Erin Gray interview; spfx model maker Martin Bowser; sf vehicles; Mork & Mandy; UFOs; Larry Butters' Crabbe interview; spfx Part XXIII — Les Bowie Part X.

**30. Star Trek: The Motion Picture** — director Robert Wise & designer Harold Michelson interviews plus Chakov's Enterprise Part I; great moments in sf; sf museum; spfx Part XXIV.

**31. 15th anniversary issue**: Index to first 34 issues; William Shatner & Leonard Nimoy interviews; UFOs; sf on radio; Moonraker; Cry of Chihlu; Alien — Co-producer Walter Hill interview; Star Wars; Close Encounters of the Third Kind; retrospectives — 2001 to the Last Wave & Destination: Moon to The Time Machine; Star Trek Battletar Galactica; Space 1999; TV sf from Lost in Space to The Incredible Hulk; spfx.

**32. Star Trek: The Motion Picture** — director Robert Wise & designer Harold Michelson interviews plus Chakov's Enterprise Part I; great moments in sf; sf museum; spfx Part XXIV.

**33. 15th anniversary issue**: Index to first 34 issues; William Shatner & Leonard Nimoy interviews; UFOs; sf on radio; Moonraker; Cry of Chihlu; Alien — Co-producer Walter Hill interview; Star Wars; Close Encounters of the Third Kind; retrospectives — 2001 to the Last Wave & Destination: Moon to The Time Machine; Star Trek Battletar Galactica; Space 1999; TV sf from Lost in Space to The Incredible Hulk; spfx.

I imagine that when Lord Grade was shown an early version of this movie he immediately demanded to know where the big spaceship was. When the producers asked "What big spaceship?" as they hurriedly checked their scripts for mention of big spaceships, Lord Grade informed them that *all* science fiction films have to start with a big spaceship passing overhead and slowly filling the screen. And that must be the reason why Saturn 3 begins with a scene that became a cinematic cliché about six Star Wars imitations back (a lot of film makers must be anxiously waiting to see how *The Empire Strikes Back* will begin in order to have something new to imitate!).

The sense of *deja-vu* that Saturn 3's opening creates persists throughout the whole movie — I was reminded partly of *Forbidden Planet* but mainly of the more recent *Demon Seed*. That movie, you may remember, concerned the efforts of a neurotic computer to mate with Julie Christie whereas Saturn 3 concerns the efforts of a neurotic robot to mate, or at least establish a meaningful relationship, with Farrah Fawcett (no comment).

At least the computer's intentions in *Demon Seed* were fairly honourable — it/he just wanted Ms Christie to have his baby, a perfectly understandable ambition, but the robot in Saturn 3 is driven by less wholesome desires, having had its brain infected by the twisted personality of a psychopath (played by Harvey Keitel), and is obviously not thinking of babies, or even wedding bells, whenever it casts its beady little eyes in Ms Fawcett's direction.

Ms Fawcett plays a character similar to the one played by Anne Francis in *Forbidden Planet* — a girl who has been living a sheltered life on a remote world with only an older man for company and who is innocent of the wicked ways of Planet Earth, except that in *Forbidden Planet* the older man was the girl's father whereas in Saturn 3 he's her lover (and played by Kirk Douglas). In both films it's the girl who is indirectly the cause of what happens, acting as a focus for subconscious desires that get out of control and wreak violence and destruction — in *Forbidden Planet* it's the father's desire to prevent her leaving him that creates the Monster from the Id while in Saturn 3 it's the intruder's desire to take her away from the older man that is manifested into a physical force, in this case the robot called Hector.

Saturn 3 reminded me of *Forbidden Planet* in other ways too. There is, for instance, the similarity between Robby the Robot and Hector — they are basically Good and Evil versions of the same robot (though Hector is of a more sophisticated design). And there is also the similarity between the interior sets of both films — the tunnels and laboratories, with their heavy, sliding doors, of the

# A STARBUST FILM REVIEW

BY JOHN BROSAN

After finishing work on *Superman*, production designer John Barry began work on a film which he was to direct. As it happened Barry left the film and joined the crew of *The Empire Strikes Back* as second unit director. Within a matter of weeks John Barry was dead, struck down by a mystery ailment. The film was finally directed by Stanley Donen.

## SATURN 3



Saturn moon base bear a strong resemblance to the underground Krel complex in *Forbidden Planet*.

Whether this similarity was deliberate or unintentional only John Barry, the man whose brain-child Saturn 3 was, could say but unfortunately he's no longer with us, having tragically died last year. Regular readers of Starbust will be aware of the problems that hampered the production, the chief one being the replacement of John Barry by Stanley Donen as the film's director after only a few weeks of shooting. Apparently it was the trio of high-powered Hollywood stars who were the cause of this. According to Donen the actors "jumped on" Barry. "It

was my fault, not John's," said Donen, "The truth is John had hardly ever been on a set, which I didn't realize. He was such a terrific talent but... he knew next to nothing about staging a scene or handling actors. The film started floundering." So Donen, the film's producer and director of such movies as *Singing in the Rain* and *Charade*, decided he would have to be on the set with Barry while he directed but Barry couldn't accept this and left the production. "There was no question of his being fired," said Donen.

The finished movie shows signs of other problems, in particular the performance by Harvey Keitel. This



Opposite below: Kirk Douglas and Harvey Keitel have a difference of opinion. Left: Farrah Fawcett as she appears in the film. Below: The sequence that was cut. Farrah in her kinky black suspenders.



Among the sequences that have ended up on the cutting room floor is the one where Keitel has a drug-induced dream about the girl. Thus the famous shot of Fawcett in her kinky black suspenders.

usually excellent actor sounds very strange indeed, the reason being that he apparently refused to do his own post-synching and so his voice was dubbed by another actor (Roy Dotrice, according to Tony Crawley). But what has most damaged *Saturn 3* are the rather drastic cuts that have been made to it (it now has a running time of only 87 minutes). Presumably these have been made in order to acquire the 'A' certificate that the film has gone out under. Among the sequences that have ended up on the cutting room floor is the one where Keitel has a drug-induced dream about the girl. Thus the famous shot of Fawcett in her kinky black costume with the suspenders — which provided the basis for the original poster — doesn't even appear in the movie. Another missing sequence is the one where the robot dismembers Keitel's body in a bizarre imitation of his own previous disassembly.

But in spite of everything *Saturn 3* remains an above-average science fiction movie. Not as impressive as *Alien* which it resembles at times but far superior to things like *The Black Hole* and, dare I say it, *Star Trek*. Unlike those two movies there is a suggestion of an intelligence at work behind *Saturn 3* and that underlying the surface action an adult theme is lurking. Credit for this must not only go to Barry, who wrote the original story, but to Martin Amis who wrote the screenplay. Amis, son of Kingsley Amis, is not

only a fine novelist in his own right but also someone who is familiar with the science fiction genre (he's been a regular reviewer of sf books in various publications for a number of years). No doubt this is the reason *Saturn 3* avoids a lot of the idiocies that usually appear in sf movies scripted by people who know nothing of either science fiction or science, though I trust that Amis wasn't responsible for the sequence where we see Keitel piloting his little space ship into and along one of Saturn's rings — the sight of the chunks of rock merrily bouncing off the ship's canopy as it hurtles through the ring must be one of the most ludicrous in the history of sf movies.

The special effects on the whole are quite good but the mechanical effects are far superior to the optical ones. For instance the various space ships have heavy matte lines around them, the model surface of Saturn's moon looks like a model surface and Saturn itself is too obviously a flat painting rather than a three dimensional object (and the scale between Saturn and Keitel's ship as it whizzes in and out of the rings is totally wrong — it looks as if Saturn is less than a mile in diameter). But the effects involving the robot itself are excellent and watching Hector in action one would never guess that he caused effects chief Colin Chilvers and his team countless problems from start to finish.

Also on the plus side are the sets by production designer Stuart Craig, a former assistant to John Barry, and Elmer Bernstein's moody and evocative soundtrack.

For all its flaws — and most of the flaws involve the cast (though I must admit that Farrah Fawcett is better than I expected her to be) — and the fact that we're seeing a shortened version of the original movie, *Saturn 3* is still something of a major achievement. It may not be what John Barry originally had in mind but one trusts he wouldn't have been too disappointed in the result.



# THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK

After a three-year wait, the *Star Wars* sequel is finally in our cinemas. John Brosnan saw the film and asks, "will *The Empire Strikes Back* open up the way for further sequels or will it be the last in the series?"

**T**here was an atmosphere of eager anticipation in the Dominion Cinema, London, before the start of the media preview of *The Empire Strikes Back*. There was also a certain amount of tension — you felt that the audience was *willing* the movie they were about to see to be as good, or hopefully even better, than *Star Wars* and were anxious not to be disappointed.

There were cheers and applause when the curtains finally parted — the audience cheered the Fox logo and even the censor's certificate, and applauded all the harder as the titles filled the screen...

Some two hours later, when the credits began to roll, there was more applause but this time it sounded restrained and a little forced and now the atmosphere was one of disappointment. I know / felt disappointed but I wasn't sure exactly why. *Empire* was certainly no dud — it was entertaining, often exciting and visually dazzling (and put such recent sf movies as *Star Trek* and *The Black Hole* completely in the galactic shade) — yet the audience, and I, felt distinctly let down. Why?

## Just why is *The Empire Strikes Back* a disappointment?

Part of the reason for my bad humour at that stage was having had to spend the whole movie sitting next to a Mundane and his small son (for those who don't know — a "Mundane" is, in science fiction fannish slang, anyone who isn't a science fiction fan. There are a lot of Mundanes in the world, as you've probably noticed). When it soon became apparent that the pair of them intended to make more noise than the Imperial Stormtroopers on the screen I had made my displeasure known, only to be





*Right: The rebel infantry, under attack by Imperial Forces, struggles to protect the main power generators for their base on the ice planet of Hoth.*

*Left: Chewbacca (Peter Mayhew) extracts his revenge after Lando Calrissian (Billy Dee Williams) betrays Han Solo to Darth Vader.*

*Above: Darth Vader (Dave Prowse) briefs a motley selection of bounty hunters for their search for Han Solo (Harrison Ford).*



informed by the Mundane that it was ridiculous for me to be upset because it was "only a kid's movie" and I was spoiling his son's enjoyment. "He gets excited at these sort of things," he then told me. "So do I," I replied menacingly.

He then actually offered me a couple of pounds to leave and come back and see the movie "some other time". This was a first for me — I've been threatened with physical violence in cinemas when

admonishing some noisy patron but never been offered money to leave before. This could be the start of a whole new career. But as it was a media screening and I was there to review the movie I declined his offer. Twentieth Century-Fox, please note.

But all that aside just why is The Empire Strikes Back a disappointment? Well, one reason is that practically all sequels fail to live up to the originals

because the film makers are invariably faced with the impossible task of repeating the ingredients that made the first film a success while making a different film at the same time. The sequels that are most successful tend to be remakes of the original work as opposed to real sequels (Jaws 2 is a perfect example of this approach, as are the Bond films — the same story is filmed again and again while only the sets are

changed). And Lucas wasn't just making a sequel to an ordinary, popular film but to the most successful film in the history of the cinema — a huge challenge which ever way you look at it (though he didn't direct *Empire* there is no doubt that he is the real creative force behind it).

Lucas, to his credit, hasn't taken the easy way out and simply remade *Star Wars*, instead he has bravely attempted to develop the story and the characters from where they left off in the previous movie. Yet while this is commendable it's also the main reason why *Empire* is a let-down.

Let's take a look back at *Star Wars* and examine why it was such a great success. Ignoring all the theories about the time being ripe for the first big-budget, space-fantasy extravaganza etc, *Star Wars* had the advantage of being an almost perfectly constructed adventure story built around the perennially popular "quest" or "mission" theme. It had a beginning, a middle and a satisfying end. Young Luke Skywalker was enlisted to help Princess Leia deliver the vital information to the rebel forces that would enable them to destroy the Empire's giant space fortress, the Death Star and to do that he first had to rescue the Princess from the clutches of the evil Grand Moff Tarkin and Darth Vader. True, there was a sub-plot concerning Luke's discovery that he was the son of a Jedi Knight and therefore one of the select few capable of learning how to manipulate the mysterious and powerful "Force", but this was incidental to the main story in *Star Wars*. The movie climaxed with a big battle that saw the destruction of the Death Star, and the death of Moff Tarkin,

*Empire* begins with an exciting bang and then fragments in all directions, splitting up the characters along the way.

and ended on a high note with an uplifting victory ceremony that sent the audiences out of the cinemas with a smile on their faces and a bounce in their step.

The *Empire*, however, doesn't have the benefit of this classical narrative structure. In fact, it doesn't have much of a structure at all. It begins with an exciting bang then fragments in all directions, splitting up the characters along the way, and ends on a very bleak, downbeat note that may leave certain younger members of the audience downright resentful . . .

The reason it has no structure is that it is just one episode in a much larger story. As Tony Crawley explained in issue 22, *The Empire* is Part 5 in Lucas's planned 9-part *Star Wars* saga. Now the cliff-hanging ending would be fine if we knew we were going to be able to see part 6 next week, next month or even six

months from now but I think expecting us to wait anything between 18 months and 3 years before we find out what happens next is a bit much on the part of Lucas and Company (there is a rumour that the movie *Raiders of the Lost Ark*, currently being directed by Steven Spielberg at Elstree, is actually *Star Wars: Part 6* but even if this is so it's still going to be a long time between installments). I sincerely doubt that it's possible to successfully harness the serial format to a series of feature films. For one thing the cinema audience isn't a static entity — it keeps changing from year to year — yet Lucas and Kurtz are behaving as if it's just one big *Star Wars* fan club that will

patiently wait as the whole story is slowly unwound over a period of 10 to 15 years . . .

Because *The Empire* is simply one episode in a bigger story it has no self-contained plot and therefore no satisfactory resolution or cathartic climax. It also lacks a satisfactory focus — in *Star Wars* this was provided by the Death Star and I was slightly surprised at how much I was aware of its absence in *The Empire*. The Death Star, I realize now, was an important ingredient in the overall structure of *Star Wars* and without its equivalent *The Empire* is like 20,000 Leagues Under the Sea without the Nautilus.



Instead of having a specific goal as they did in *Star Wars*, this time our heroes have little to do but flee the Imperial forces after the initial battle on the Ice World (these sequences are probably the most memorable in the movie and should have been used as the climax). The main plot element is Luke's continuing development as a Jedi Knight and while I could just about take all the pseudo-mystical waffle about the Force when it was simply an incidental part of *Star Wars* I'm finding it more than a little tedious now that it's been promoted to stage centre.

Judging by the emphasis he places upon it I suspect that Lucas himself takes

it all very seriously and it might even mirror his own personal philosophy (student film maker of small stature discovers hidden powers within himself and defeats the dreaded Hollywood Empire — which means that in reality Ben Kenobi is Lucas's old mentor, Francis Ford Coppola). Or is he just being shrewd in figuring that today's youth have a need for this sort of stuff, particularly in America. After *Star Wars*, for example, Alec Guinness started getting letters from people in America saying: "You've altered our lives. You must come and live with us . . ."

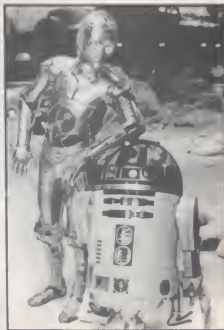
But what I found *really* tedious was Luke's new Jedi teacher, Yoda. He, or it,



is a cross between Gollum and a Hobbit and, small as he is, a little of him goes a *long* way. Admittedly he's an ingenious creation in the technical sense, being none other than one of Frank Oz's Muppets, but after a few minutes of his company I was yearning to stuff him in the nearest Black Hole. If we must have Muppets in *Star Wars* let it be Miss Piggy (*Pigs in Space?*)

I suppose the most disappointing thing about *The Empire*, apart from the diffused narrative, was the apparent lack of originality. *Star Wars* was, after all, the first movie to reproduce in the cinema, scenes and settings that had previously only existed on the covers of sf magazines and comic books. But since then, of course, there have been several movies featuring giant space ships, space battles, alien creatures and alien landscapes. Lucas and his team have become victims of their own success — their original

Left: A tense scene in which Han Solo (Harrison Ford), at the mercy of Darth Vader (Dave Provost), prepares to face his fate. Above: Carrie Fisher as Princess Leia. Below: See-Threepio and Artoo-Deetoo.



vision has become diluted by all the limitations that followed in the wake of *Star Wars*.

I said "apparent" lack of originality because, though this was the overall impression I received, there was a lot of original material in *The Empire* but unfortunately most of it was featured in the early section of the film, the Ice World sequences, and its impact had rather faded by the end. For example, the creatures (called Tauntauns) that Luke and Solo were seen riding, and the incredible walking fortresses used by Darth Vader's men to attack the rebel stronghold (beautiful model animation!). But after that it was back into outer space with the space ships again. The special effects in these subsequent sequences were excellent, as one would expect, but it's all become too familiar now while the floating city which provided the setting for the end section of the movie was okay but a mite tacky and certainly no substitute for the Death Star (I also thought that the matte paintings used in these sequences weren't up to the standard of the ones used in *Star Wars*).

**The refreshing streak of humour, which was established in *Star Wars* was still very much in evidence.**

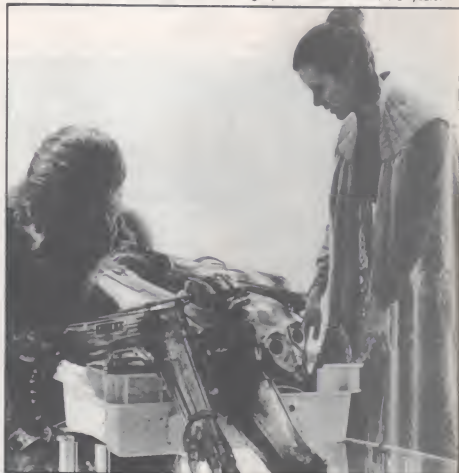
Okay, that's enough complaining — what did I like about the movie? Well, as I said at the start it was entertaining and what more can you ask from a movie? (No, don't answer that.) It had plenty of pace, except for the scenes with the ghastly Yoda, and the refreshing streak of humour that was established in *Star Wars*, and is so rare in most sf movies, was still very much in evidence. Most of the humour was, inevitably, provided by the two robots but many of the other characters were given the occasional amusing moment also. Even Lord Darth Vader got the chance to display his sense of humour though naturally it was rather

on the dark side ("Apologies accepted," he tells an Imperial Officer after strangling him for committing an error).

Solo and Leia's funniest moment came just before he was about to be carbon-frozen (or whatever) — "I love you," she told him. "I know," he replied solemnly. At least I *presumed* it was meant to be funny. (Actually I thought their love affair was both unconvincing and a serious misjudgement on Lucas's part.)

The battle between Luke and Darth Vader at the end of the movie was well

staged, and the subsequent cliff-hanging finale was suitably nerve-wracking but it all just wasn't *enough* somehow. I guess what I wanted to see after all was a remake of *Star Wars* done "differently" and though, as I noted earlier, Lucas has commendably refused to go that route I wonder if I was alone in that wish or will it be shared by the film-going public as a whole? Has Lucas misinterpreted the reasons for the success of *Star Wars* in presuming that the audience want a vast saga spun out over a number of years?



Will his long-term gamble pay off or will the whole thing grind to a halt. Well, despite all my reservations I sincerely hope it doesn't. But I also hope that with future installments he and his writers manage to make each film satisfyingly *self-contained* instead of just being a spectacular fragment of a great whole, as was *The Empire Strikes Back*.

Above: Chewbacca (Peter Mayhew) and Princess Leia (Carrie Fisher) examine the remains of *Threepio* (Anthony Daniels). Left: You are feeling sleepy! Irvin Kershner directs Anthony Daniels on the set of *The Empire Strikes Back*.

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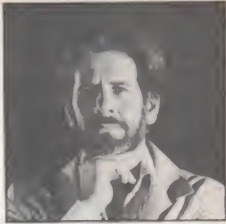
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# The FLASH GORDON Chronicles

## Part 1:

## THE STARS OF

# FLASH GORDON

Anthony Paul reports on the new Dino De Laurentiis movie from Shepperton Studios.

**Y**ou don't have to take my word for it, but easy as it is to smirk at a film in which people unwittingly call out inuendos like "Hey, Flash, over here," I reckon *Flash Gordon* has a lot going for it.

From what I could tell after spending a day on the set down at Shepperton studios, it's a film to laugh, or at least smile, with rather than at. You know it's not really taking itself seriously when Flash announces to an impaled Ming, who's had the misfortune to stand right where Flash's spike-tipped spaceship has landed, "The game's up, Ming."

Dino De Laurentiis has poured over thirty million dollars into this ex'ravagant carbon copy of the original. Fortunately, its heart is in the right place. Director Mike Hodges (who took over from Nic Roeg after De Laurentiis and Roeg experienced "artistic differences") and production designer Danilo Donati have ensured that sets and costumes retain that oriental, swashbuckling flavour of the original.

The man succeeding Buster Crabbe in the role of the whitest of all the whiter-than-white space heroes is Sam Jones, that lucky sunofagun who got to marry

Bo Derek in 10. Sam Jones is, as one young astute female member of the film crew put it, "a 6ft 3in hunk!" The story that De Laurentiis's mother-in-law spotted Sam on a tv show called *The Mating Game* is true. But Sam had to go through a minor metamorphosis first. His brown hair had to be dyed blond, and a few pounds of unwanted flab had to be got rid of.

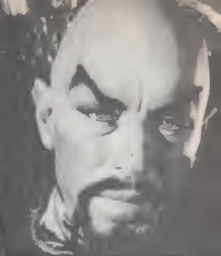
"Dino told me to lose 12 pounds in a month," Sam told me. "I ran six miles every day around Hyde Park and after just a week I'd lost the 12 pounds.

"I like to keep in shape, but I don't



Opposite: The cast of the new version (above) and their counterparts from the original *Flash Gordon* serial of 1936 (below). Featuring (Left to right) Ornela Muti as Princess Aura, daughter of Ming the Merciless, a role made famous by Pricilla Lawson in the original. Sam Jones is Flash Gordon in the new film, while the earlier version was, of course, Larry

"Buster" Crabbe. Chiam Topol stands in, in the *De Laurentis* version, for Frank Shannon as Professor Alexis Zerkov — only the name has been changed to Professor Hanz Zerkov. Above: Melody Anderson steps into Jean Rogers shoes as Flash's companion in adventure, Dale Arden. Right: The original Ming of Mongo was serial villain Charles Middleton. Taking over the role is Swedish actor Max Von Sydow (above right). Below right: Dale and Flash fiddle with the controls of their rocket ship in the 1936 serial.



eat anything special. Just the normal junk food we Americans are famous for."

As tall as Sam is, he is completely overshadowed on the set by Max Von Sydow in the flowing robes of Ming, Emperor of Mongo. In fact, with his head completely shaved and oriental beard and eye brows applied, the towering Von Sydow is quite an awesome sight. He described Ming as "a mixture of Mephisto and Rasputin. Unlike anything I have done before. Ming is the greatest evil that comic strips have ever produced."

Swedish Max Von Sydow has made quite a reputation for himself as one of the finest heavies in movies today, despite the fact that he played what for me at least was the definitive Christ in *The Greatest Story Ever Told*. "I suspect it's a question of nationality," he rationalises. "Villains are frequently foreigners — it seems to be politically expedient."

Von Sydow treads well in the footsteps of Charles Middleton, the original Ming. Middleton also specialised in villains, especially in serials. In *The Miracle Rider* Tom Mix was after him for coveting deposits of an explosive called X-94. And in *Dick Tracy Returns* he was the notorious Pa Stark, patriarch of an evil brood of five larcenous sons. There were others, but it was as Ming in the *Flash Gordon* adventures that Middleton will always be loathed and loved for.

Middleton's popularity as Ming compared favourably with Buster Crabbe's as Flash, though for contrasting reasons. But Crabbe was undoubtedly the king of the cliffhangers. Besides *Flash Gordon*, Crabbe also brought Red Barry, a private eye, to the screen, and there was, of course, *Buck Rogers*, not to be confused with the disastrous remake. Crabbe went through a seven year period out of serials when he played in B-minus westerns. But he returned in the late

**Buster Crabbe made it very clear that he would have loved a part in the new *Flash Gordon*, playing Flash's dad perhaps, but neither Dino De Laurentis nor Mike Hodges heeded the plea.**

Forties to create Captain Silver in *The Sea Hound* and then did a poor Tarzan rip-off called *King of the Congo*. That was in 1952 and it was the last serial he ever made. Today he is a sprightly 72 and just recently he played the role of a space pirate in the tv series of *Buck Rogers*. He made it very clear that he would have loved a part in the new *Flash Gordon*, playing Flash's dad perhaps, but neither Dino De Laurentis nor Mike Hodges heeded the plea. Which is a shame since Von Sydow says, "This film is being

made for the *Flash Gordon* aficionados."

Superseding Jean Rogers in the role of Dale Arden is newcomer Melody Anderson who describes her part as "a very spunky, very New York City gal. She carries a copy of *Karate for the Single Girl*, but has a nice vulnerable side to her too."

Remember Topol? He's Chiam Topol now, and he plays Doctor Hanz Zerkov. Another old, familiar face is that of Peter Wyngarde as Klytus, trusted acolyte to Ming the Merciless.

Timothy Dalton has the part of Barin, Prince of Arboria and there's even barrel-shaped Brian Blessed as Vultan, rugged leader of the Kingdom of Hawkmen.

As far as I can make out, the concentration is now on the special effects, being supervised by Glen Robinson whose work has included *Meteor*, *King Kong* and *Earthquake*.

The only weak spot seems to me to be the choice of Mike Hodges. He's more at home with gangsters like *Get Carter*. His only previous excursion into the realms of science was *The Terminal Man* which the distributors wisely terminated before it could go on release. Shame that Roeg got the push. After all, he was going to cast Debbie Harry in the film. But maybe the inclusion of the most famous Blondie would have made fair *Flash* look more like *Brand X*!



# The FLASH GORDON Chronicles

**T**he big, innumerable-million-dollar Dino De Laurentiis film version of Flash Gordon doesn't come our way until long after the empire has struck back – around Christmastime.

But there has been just no escaping Flash lately . . . He's been turning up all over the place as the rest of the media get into the Starburst business. From the Sunday Times Magazine's neat idea of re-running the old and balloonless Alex Raymond colour strips, circa 1939, in its younger-readers' section, *Start Here* . . . to Time magazine reminding us that it was Flash Gordon who first informed the world of what is now the most likely cancer cure-all drug, Interferon, in a Dan Barry strip, circa 1960, just a handful of years after Jean Linderman and the late Alick Isaacs fell upon the big IF drug.

Not to mention Buster Crabbe still popping up on BBC-TV in the old 1938 *Trip To Mars* . . . and the Filimation animated Flash series to come along very soon.

And then, of course, I just happened to be sitting his den with Nic Roeg, when inevitably the subject of Flash Gordon came up . . .

PART TWO

## NICOLAS ROEG



While Anthony Paul was at Shepperton Studios investigating the new version of *Flash Gordon*, Tony Crawley was talking to Nic Roeg, who was to have directed the film but was replaced at the last minute by Mike Hodges due to "creative differences".

To think of what we've lost without Nic Roeg making Flash Gordon is bad enough. What's worse is when he shows you his wondrous collection of production art for the project. His Ralph McQuarries, if you like, though in Nic's case the artwork and designs are the mind-boggling work of Nando Scarfiotti.

It was just a cursory look I enjoyed. And this is where, this once, I'm rather at a loss for words. To say the set designs were all one might expect of Nic Roeg working Alex Raymond into movie form, is almost sufficient – but hardly covers the scope of his and Nando's vision.

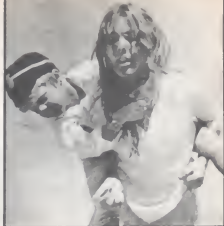
Ming's tall palace, with a revolving globe-like prison mounted within the stem of it . . . other buildings planted, as it were, in the mammoth trunks of trees, like intricate concrete wedges . . . a sparse bedroom, nun or monk-like in its austerity, dark and penitential, but gaining light, and a myriad of colours in the foreground.

Then there were the ships – and the happenings in the heavens. Warriors floating through the galaxy as if in their own spit-balls, or transparent shelters . . .

And more, so much more, that



Above: Performance (1967) featured Anita Pallenberg as Pherber and James Fox as Chas. Above right: Exhausted by their journey across the Australian desert, *The Girl* (Jenny Agutter) carries her brother (Lucien John Roeg) after he has collapsed from the effects of the heat: *Walkabout* (1970). Right: Director Nicolas Roeg caught in a pensive mood. Below: Three travellers on a trek across the wastes of Australia: *David Gumpili*, Lucien John Roeg and Jenny Agutter.



within the twinkling of an eye, the flick of a page as he spun through them, the mind could only take in so much and revel in and wonder about, and wish to see alive and vivid and real on a screen.

It's safe to say that not even Roeg's son, Waldo, has seen anything like these sf vistas while crashing into the film business himself as a runner on the Superman set. They're thoroughly unique.

Add to the grand design his always rich ideas in casting — he won't say who he had in mind for Flash, but casually mentions Keith Carradine would have been his Ming, and Debbie Harry, the Blondie singer, as Princess Aura...

Oh boy, what we've lost...

The very idea of Nicholas Roeg making the Flash movie — or indeed any movie, even more so, any science fantasy superhero movie — had been among the most exciting news items I'd reported in *Things To Come*. The fact that he'd left the project (since completed by Mike Hodges) was among the saddest.

Nobody, but nobody, in Britain (or the rest of the world come to that) makes movies like Roeg makes movies. Give him a few million dollars for once, and his magic would have been unequalled.

For this is our pre-eminent filmmaker, fathering a wholly new cinematic clime and form, since *Performance* in 1967. Attacking all set standards and rules with his cross-cut juxtapositioning of time and place, with his love of ambiguity, antitheses, people, sex, romance... and above all, of movies.

He deals in what his *Man Who Fell To Earth* scenarist, Paul Mayersberg, once called "a minefield of images." They're keys, clues, traps, reflections; purposeful visuals all. Not one frame of his films is wasted.

He is, then, a better wizard than Merlin. And the mind boggled, therefore, at the thought of what he could accomplish in George Lucas country.



Left: Rock singer David Bowie was *The Man Who Fell to Earth* (1976). Below: Theresa Russell and Art Garfunkel appear in Roeg's latest offering, *Bad Timing* (1979). Right: Bowie as he appeared in Roeg's first of venture, *The Man Who Fell to Earth* (1976). Far right: A portrait of anguish, Donald Sutherland carries the lifeless form of his daughter in *Don't Look Now* (1973).

"I had an arrangement with Dino De Laurentiis when I started it, that we would take it in stages and at each stage he would have a chance to stop . . . or I would!"

— Nicolas Roeg, director.



He wouldn't have gone in for cuddly robots, and helped keep the toy and soap manufacturers in gimmicks for another twelve months, that's for sure. (And that is, maybe, one of the reasons he didn't make the film . . . or wasn't allowed to).

Then again, the film was to be produced and paid for by Dino de Laurentiis, and Dino is nothing if not commercial. Crassly so, most times. Dino signing up Roeg was, on the face of it, like the Carry On team hiring Cary Grant. A great idea, but one that surely wouldn't, couldn't, gell in the end. Such parallel lines of what constitutes art movie never meet.

If Dino had left him to it, Roeg would have made him no ordinary superhero movie. Dino, apparently, preferred to play safe and to hell with breaking more of the screen's barriers.

Well, nobody pushes Roeg around on his films. That's one reason he's made five only in thirteen years. But what a five: *Performance* (1967), *Walkabout* (1970), *Don't Look Now* (1973), *The Man Who Fell to Earth* (1976) and now *Bad Timing* (1979), which opened in April, after being shot, edited, made and finished with while Dino's *Flash* trundles on in the special effects facilities of the world.

So . . . what . . . how . . . when . . . and why . . . ?

One's mind seethed with questions about what might have been in a *Roeg Flash*. Nic Roeg, though, if not exactly reticent, is far too polite a Britisher to badmouth anyone, or talk too much about his version of something that now someone else is making. Quite obviously, he did not wish to be too drawn upon the subject.

*What happened?*

Well, nothing really!

*Exactly. But why? The whole idea of you tackling Flash Gordon had me so excited . . .*

It had me quite excited! I liked it.

I worked on it for a year. I've all the

material on the film at the end of the hall in the other office. Massive work. So . . . what happened?

I had an arrangement with De Laurentiis when I started it, that we would take it in stages and at each stage he would have a chance to stop . . . or I would. We could sit down and say, "Do you want to go on the way I'm going . . . or . . . ?"

We got through a year like that. And we were within a month or so of shooting and . . . I guess, he wanted to make another movie. He was letting me go on those stages, which was fair enough. In the end, he was very fair and I think we're still good friends.

*How did he put it?*

We had all those stages and Dino said, "Look, this is not the film I want to make of *Flash Gordon*. Thank you (Roeg mimes a cheque being signed, with a laugh) and goodbye. Or stay." He actually said, "Stay, please stay." At one time, he said, "Produce it with me. Go on a holiday. Go to Bora-Bora (where De Laurentiis built a hotel to house his *Hurricane* cast and crew in 1977). Let me have my say — let me say what I want to do with *Flash Gordon* . . . because I don't want to do this."

And I said, "I don't want to go to

Bora-Bora". (Laugh). Actually, in a joking way, I said to Dino, "I'm for hire but I'm not for sale!"

I just didn't want to go there and . . . wait. I was excited. This was the film I wanted to make. And he said, "It isn't the film I want to make." So that was it. It's kind of like a guy like Churchill having the right to burn the Sutherland painting . . . I mean, it isn't that . . . but . . .

*But it upset you?*

It upset me only inasmuch as I wanted to do it. But if someone doesn't want to give you the bread, you can hardly be upset by it.

(In an interview with Harlan Kennedy in the *US* magazine, *American Film*, which Roeg says has quite a few misquotations, he was reported as saying: "Dino told me what he wanted to do. It seemed alright, but I think I'll stick with mine!")

*What was your Flash going to be like — hardly son of Star Wars or Battlestar Galactica, that's for sure.*

Slightly different . . . (The understatement of the year). It was good fun. I liked it.

*Who would have been your Flash? (Long Pause). Totally different casting . . . it wouldn't be fair to say at this point, because I wish Mike Hodges all*



the best of luck with his version. Mike Hodges is a good mate. I introduced him to Dino, actually, because I wanted Mike to work with me. But we got to a point where, I guess, it's a matter of control or whatever, it was not the story Dino finally wanted to do. And he was both producer and financier of it.

It was sometime after that, that Nic Roeg invited me down to the other office at the end of the hallway of his Marylebone flat in London, and from a shelf, he took down three books crammed full of his coloured reproductions of the production paintings for the film. He showed them off with great enthusiasm, still delighted with them, and with not a word of rancour for a full year's work adding up to little more than what he spun through on the desk, plus the script on the same shelf.

I said, I'd be quite mad in his shoes, and he just laughed. It's not the first time it's happened to him. He was all set to make *Walkabout* as his first movie, when financing collapsed... *Bad Timing* was due to have been out before he even started on *Flash Gordon*, and again he had to wait for money to get shooting.

Rarely, though, has he done quite so much physical pre-production work as for *Flash*. He reached up again, and produced a story-board of xeroxed-pages — like a book. He flicked through it, and his *Flash Gordon* came to jerky, black-and-white cartoony life. This was merely the bare bones, but my word, it worked... right from the opening shots of the three principals at work, behind their apartment windows, each one under the other in the same block...

Roeg rarely — if ever — works from story-boards, not even with the time-juggling scenes in *Bad Timing*, which

required much pre-planned choreo-graphics.

"No, I like to leave it open. I may work with him, but I like the writer to have his own single version — it's his script. He does the physical work, we change lines together, but it isn't written shot-for-shot or story-boarded out, because I like to keep it all so free — because the actors have to read it and get it on, and they contribute as well.

"That is, I think one of my major problems as far as studios and production companies are concerned. They read scripts in a very literary way. But a screenplay that I like working on has nothing to do with literature at all. So much has to be left out...

"A script is my guideline — very carefully written. I like to feel confident within those terms, but I don't like to feel it is nailed down. Cinema is a recognisably different art-form now — I think it was from the beginning. It is a *different* art-form. I don't mean that in an over-stated, pretentious way — it's just a fact. I can't help it. It is *our* art-form. Up to the turn of the century, we didn't have it, and that's all there is to it.

"We laughed at it at first, we dismissed it, we were so entranced in thinking that no other art-form could exist. There will be something else that will happen. Some amazing thing. Holography... Then, though the use of three-dimensional images, you will inhabit two places simultaneously. It will be as shattering as the first time somebody saw the moving picture, which must have been an incredible event."

Laurel and Hardy proved such an event for the schoolboy Roeg. Their comedy shot of a feather floating upwards made him want to make his own movies. "Orson Welles said that film was the most expensive train-set a boy could be given. That's true! I suppose it's the closest thing to a time machine. The thought of being able to capture time moving backwards and forwards has always fascinated me..."

And this is the man that Dino De Laurentiis preferred *not* to have make his *Flash Gordon*...

Unfortunately, we cannot show you any of the Nic Roeg production art. We asked; of course we did. "I wouldn't do anything with them," said Roeg. "I guess there's a chance someday... They're really Dino's copyright. But obviously, he wants to sell his movie. And this is a totally different film. Quite right, too. But it was a lovely thing. I was sad not to do it."

Aren't we all?

## THE STAR WARS INTERVIEWS PART ONE

# THE STAR WARS SPACE ARMIES OF JOHN MOLLO

JOHN MOLLO HAS A STRING OF MOVIES TO HIS CREDIT. HIS CAREER BEGAN AS A TECHNICAL ADVISOR ON *THE CHARGE OF THE LIGHT BRIGADE* AND REACHED AN APEX WITH AN OSCAR FOR HIS COSTUME DESIGNS FOR *STAR WARS*. MOLLO RETURNS TO THE LUCAS FOLD WITH *THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK*. NICHOLAS LEAHY SPOKE TO MOLLO AT PINEWOOD STUDIOS, WHERE HE IS CURRENTLY WORKING ON THE PETER HYAMS SF FILM *OUTLAND*.

**W**hen the film *Star Wars* first appeared, the technical people responsible for it, working in close collaboration with the director George Lucas, managed to create on the screen a convincing ambience of other worlds. The film won seven Oscars for technical achievement, one of which went to John Mollo for best costume design. Working without a previous visual scheme in mind, how did he and George Lucas create the look of the characters that have since become so famous, and the sinister efficiency of all the servants of Darth Vader, celebrated again in the new film *The Empire Strikes Back*?

John Mollo was working at Pinewood Studios, England, on the new science fiction film *Outland* starring Sean Connery and written and directed by Peter Hyams, who made *Capricorn One*, when he got out his file on *The Empire Strikes Back* and spread out on his office desk the complete costume designs for the two space armies featured in the film. He recalled how they had all gone to war the first time round.

"The basic problems are always the same really, what the director wants. The first thing is to find out how the director ticks, and then go away and make sketches and samples until you get the thing right. Unlike period films, where there are limits to what is correct, with science fiction films you can go in any direction with any style. I like the idea that they shouldn't be costume so much, but clothing, really. If you notice the clothes too much, it's bad. You've got to get something that is right, but you mustn't distract the attention of the audience. That's the first problem. The second problem is getting the stuff made, on time and on budget. George Lucas is very energetic, very restless and very shy. But he's good in that once he makes a decision, he sticks by it. On the first film, we were all experimenting. We went to Barman's, the costumiers, and just dressed up a lot of people in stock, and then decided 'in the round' really, and then went away and made it the way we wanted it. The first Darth Vader was wearing a motorcycle suit, and a sort of



opera cloak, and a Nezi steel helmet, and a gas mask, and a medieval breast plate, all from different departments, all brought in together and put on, and it seemed to work", he said with some amusement. "George wanted Obi-Wan Kenobi (*Alec Guinness*) to look like a cross between a monk and a samurai knight. It's never really the principals who pose the problems, so much as the practical stuff for the extras. I remember, for the rebel pilots who have air hoses on their chests, we suddenly went out and got bath overflow pipes for them from the ironmonger's outside the studio. We bought fifty, and he looked rather surprised. On the second film we were more organised, and got flexible tubing. On the first one they looked awful, really. And the backpacks were made out of seedboxes. The baddie's cap badge is actually a pulley wheel from a gramophone".

Nevertheless, with his experience, he managed to make them all look part of a convincing military hierarchy.

John Mollo was born in London in 1931, and as a boy became interested in military uniforms, although he first made a career in a civil engineering firm. With the help of his brother, Andrew Mollo, the director, he first became a technical advisor on military costumes for Tony Richardson's film *The Charge Of The Light Brigade*, made in 1968. From then on he



"The helmets were made of fibre glass, and very hot and heavy, with the tubes for the air and lights fed into them from behind to achieve the effects." John Mollo on Allen.

worked in the same capacity for the films *The Adventures of Gerard*, *Nicholas and Alexandra*, and the Stanley Kubrick epic *Barry Lyndon*, and became a costume designer with *Star Wars*. He has also written six books on military costumes, several of them for the Blandford Press, and his best known work is the definitive *Military Fashion*, which details the complete history of European and American uniforms from 1640 to 1914. His younger brother, Andrew, has also been involved in military matters. With Kevin Brownlow, he made a film showing the hypothetical German invasion of Britain, called *It Happened Here*, and keeps a collection of World War Two mementoes. Older brother John spurns this era having lived through it. His favourite period is that of Napoleon, and he keeps watercolour prints on the walls of his country home. How influenced was he by his knowledge of real military uniforms in his designs for the fictitious armies of *Star Wars*?

"It helps a bit, because I think uniforms are really difficult to make so that they look good. It's very easy to make them look bad. Basically, George wanted the Empire to look like Fascists, and the rebels like casual Americans. The storm troopers are in white instead of black so it's less obvious. Their headgear is a cross between a flying helmet and a gas mask. Their costumes are quite flimsy, really. When Gary Kurtz, the producer, saw *Alien*, he saw that everything looked better, hung together better, so he had a new set of stormtroopers made for *The Empire Strikes Back*. They only just lasted until the end of the picture. We thought of introducing a lot more, like an Imperial Navy to go with the Imperial Army, but in the end we decided not to overdo it. We agreed early on that the army should have a booted look, like the Germans in 1939, but actually their tunics look more like the 1914-18 ones. They're cut longer. You try not to make the connection too obvious". So the imperialism of the space Empire is reflected in turn of the century, imperial uniforms — inspiration courtesy of Kaiser Wilhelm.

John Mollo also designed the space-suits for *Alien*. "The director, Ridley Scott, came with a book of Japanese armour, and said he wanted them based on that, and a cross between a diving suit", Mollo said. "And we kept that, but abandoned the shape of Japanese helmets, and just kept the breast-plates. We also had them colour coded, beige, pink and yellow for character identification, but it was so dark you couldn't see it. The helmets were made of fibre glass, and very hot and heavy, with the tubes for the air and lights fed into them from behind to achieve the effects. But we've learnt from our mistakes, and the helmets in *Outland* are plastic and vacuum formed, that is the plastic is drawn down over a mould in a vacuum, like making a box of chocolates, and the result is very lightweight. The *Nostromo* crew were rather greasy and practical, like the people in the mining town in *Outland* are, which is a sort of Western in space, and they're all dressed a bit like they're working on an oil rig". He drew attention to a rack of lumber-jackets, and some American police hickory

night sticks that the law would wield in the frontier town of *Outland*.

Why does he prefer uniforms rather than general fashion? "I think it's because with every uniform, there is a job that goes with it that defines it and gives it a function. I like it

because it's practical". John Mollo's most graphic achievement so far is to have given the uniformed Imperial servants of *The Empire Strikes Back* a visual sense of military unity, and convincing purpose as they pursue the everyday business of evil.



Above: A group of fierce Tusken Raiders from *Star Wars*. Below: Darth Vader and his Nazi-inspired henchmen. All costumes by John Mollo.





Darth Vader, Dark Lord of the Sith — evil figurehead of the Imperial Forces.



A member of Darth Vader's Guard Corps. Notice the Vader-style helmet.



This Imperial Snow-walker Pilot wears armour in the style of the Stormtroopers.

# STAR THE EMPIRE STRIKE

On this page we present a selection of original designs from John Mollo's portfolio from both *Star Wars* and *The Empire Strikes Back*.



Princess Leia Organa — attired for survival on the snowy wastes of Hoth.



A Crewman of the Rebel Alliance, dressed for the icy conditions on Hoth.



Rebel Generals are dressed alike. Note the goggles, worn by Imperial Generals also.



The original design for Obi-Wan Kenobi (*Alec Guinness*).

# THE PIRE ES BACK WARS™

With Best Wishes  
To FAN & ART Readers  
From  
John McHale



The design for the uniform of General Veers — again with a Vader-style helmet.



An Imperial crewman, one of the lowlier members of the Imperial caste-system.



An Imperial Officer. The echoes of the German uniforms of WWI are strong.



Luke Skywalker in his combat outfit, his light-saber slung from his belt.



The familiar garb of Han Solo (Harrison Ford) retained from the first film.



The bulky attire worn by the men who fly the X-Wing fighters, the Rebel Pilots.



The Rebel Snowtrooper, burdened with the equipment for sub-zero survival.



A selection of colourful scenes from Stephen Lisberger's *Animalympics*.



**Phil Edwards reviews the film and talks to the director, Stephen Lisberger.**

It was during the 1976 Olympics that writer/director Steven Lisberger came up with the idea for a new animated cartoon film which would pit various animals against one another in assorted sporting endeavours. For the next four years — two of which were spent in pre-production — as many as eighty animators and artists laboured under the creative guidance of Lisberger, transforming his concept into a cinematic reality.

Lisberger was born in 1952 into a family of classical artists and from an early age was captivated by the animated Disney features. In later years he was influenced by the cartoons from Warner Brothers, although not by any one particular animator's work. As he says, "it was the characters that influenced me, rather than the animators. So much footage was shot of each of those characters that they really developed themselves."

His film, *Animalympics*, neatly avoids the cute one-dimensionality of the later Disney offerings by treading a fine line between the hard edge of early Bakshi films (*Fritz the Cat*, *Heavy Traffic*) and the characterisation of the pre-50s Disney output.

It was planned as a two-part feature for American television (some was shown during the Winter Olympics at Lake Placid) and as gap fillers during Olympic broadcasts. However, the threatened disruption of the Olympics of 1980 threw the plan into jeopardy. The feature was rapidly picked up for theatrical distribution both here and in America.

Lisberger founded his animation studio in 1971 in Boston. The small company rapidly moved into the production of commercials, animated title sequences and animated spots for a Sunday morning kids show, which he describes as being "a bit like *Tiswas*". *Animalympics* grew out of a seven minute short and, following a grant from the American Film Institute, Lisberger moved his base of operations to California. As Lisberger says, "the grant wasn't a lot of money, but in terms of encouragement and respect, it meant a great deal."

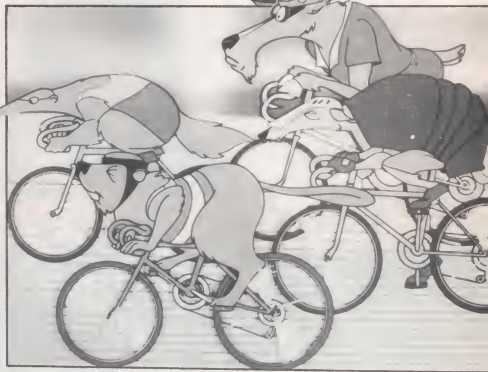
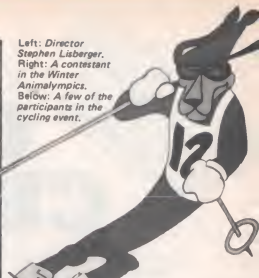
*Animalympics* grew and grew. Lisberger and his artists studied hours of film and video tapes of athletes and brought in several to advise on movement and configuration.

It was at this stage that rock composer Graham Gouldman of the band, 10cc, joined the project at Lisberger's invitation. "I liked 10cc's music a lot; they struck me as being one of the few groups that have a great sense of humour in their music," states Lisberger.

Gouldman was happy to become part



Left: Director Stephen Lisberger. Right: A contestant in the Winter Animalympics. Below: A few of the participants in the cycling event.



of the production and it marks his first full-fledged contribution to film music. He says of the collaboration, "it was to be a 10cc project but unfortunately Eric Stewart (the other half of the group) had a serious accident and spent seven months recuperating. Steve asked me if I would like to compose the music myself."

*Animalympics* is very much a musical and Lisberger confesses that the musical timing in relation to the image was influenced by *Fantasia*, a film he admires. He also acknowledges that *Animalympics* is more of a musical than it appears to be.

*Animalympics* is not one hundred per cent successful however, and its final theatrical form shows some signs of rapid pasting up from its original fragmented form. Somewhere along the hour mark, the film falls and becomes somewhat draggy.

Lisberger denies that the film is a political statement, although he says "I feel athletes are an endangered species.

People have lost track of the real meaning of the Olympics."

The young director is also very interested in the various modern techniques of animation and shows a special liking for the use of back-lit animation, a process in which the cels are lit from underneath rather than the flatter overhead lighting of the traditional style. Computer animation is another field he is involved in, working with John Whitney Jr on experimental films.

Despite *Animalympics'* faults, it remains a hugely entertaining movie, great fun for the kids without being condescending to its young audience. For adults, the film has enough wit and satire to be more than a passing diversion.

**Footnote:** For the past year, Steven Lisberger has been working on an animated feature called *Tron* — the adventures of a man who falls into and becomes part of a computer.

THE STARBURST  
INTERVIEW

# COLIN CHILVERS

British mechanical effects expert Colin Chilvers has had a long and varied career in the field of cinema. His first assignment as an effects supervisor was on Ken Russell's *Tommy*, followed by another Russell assignment, *Lisztomania*. Chilvers also worked on Richard Lester's *The Ritz* before landing the job of supervising the mechanical effects on



Richard Donner's *Superman* . . . and repeated that role on the sequel, *Superman II*. In between his involvement with Clark Kent's alter ego, Chilvers managed to find time to provide the mechanical effects on John Barry's robot picture, *Saturn 3*, working mainly on the robot itself. Tony Crawley spoke to Chilvers before *Saturn 3* opened.

## Part One: Hector and Me

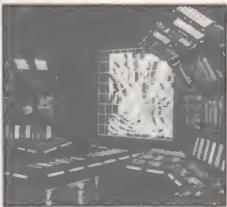




If you believe Chris Reeve can fly, Colin Chilvers is one of the reasons as he is one of the brilliant British special effects team which scooped the Oscars last year for their super-magic, making Kryptonians fly, walk on water, sear elements with their heat vision, create instant hurricanes with their super-breath... and all the rest of it.

Now Colin is stretching his vistas, and our imaginations, anew as the effects guv'nor on Lord Lew Grade's late entry into the space race, *Saturn 3* — based on an original story by the late John Barry, production designer on *Superman* and *Star Wars*. And if you believe in the awesome power of Hector, first of John Barry's "Demi-God series of robots", then once again Colin Chilvers is the reason why...

Literally fighting his way into movies straight from art school, Chilvers has had one of the most rapid rises in the history of special effects. He worked on his first feature as a lowly assistant in 1970. "My first job? Spending weeks making Styrafoam snow. My second? Wiring thousands of bullet-hits." During Alan Arkin's one-off take-over of Peter Sellers' Inspector Clouseau he had to solve a



particularly vexing problem involving a laser beam cutting through the detective's pipe. He pulled it off and was immediately promoted to special effects supervisor. He was aged nineteen.

And by April last year, he was in the Dorothy Chandler Pavillion at the Los Angeles Music Centre collecting an Academy Award. Consequently, Colin Chilvers is now one of the most in-demand effects specialists in the world, chewing his way through six spectacular offers when we caught up with him, ranging from the mammoth Lucasberger event at Elstree studios, *Raiders of the Lost Ark* (which he reveals is set in the '30s) to the newest projects of John Boorman, Ridley Scott and the Disney studio. (He finally chose the Disney caper, *Condorman*). At the same time, alas, he's currently planning burgeoning movie activities in Canada, along with three other award-winning effects aces: Roy Whybrow, Martin Gutteridge and Roy Field.

High on his list of memorable movie



moments are the exorcism of Wagner by Liszt in Ken Russell's mind-boggling *Lisztomania*... Tina Turner's Acid Queen scenes in Russell's *Tommy* and, naturally enough, the staggering helicopter sequence in *Superman*. Not to mention, "the helluva trouble we had with Hector on *Saturn 3*."

We talked with him during his final days on *Superman II* (about which he was suitably guarded, apart from cryptic comments about certain scenes), and we discussed, in particular, his work on *Saturn 3*, finally directed by its producer Stanley Donen, after John Barry was removed from his own movie a matter of weeks before his tragic death. As becomes clear, our interview took place before we had any opportunity to see the completed film.

**Starburst:** *When did you first meet Hector?*

Chilvers: When they'd started casting him in plaster. They'd made a full-size model which had been changed two or three times and were beginning to start casting from that. First time we really saw it altogether was not long before we started to shoot.

**What is he — I mean, it — made of?**

We all say he... Steel, fibreglass, lots of radio controls and electronics, bits of string, elastic bands. Anything that would make him work.

**He was a problem then?**

Special effects have always been a problem in the film industry in England. There's always a gap which we're trying desperately to close between the art department and the special effects department. We have to get the effects unit involved earlier, because it's down to us later to make it all work. With all the best draughtsmen in the world, the special effects man is the man operating everything in the end.

**Why the gap then?**

It has carried over from a long time ago, when British effects technicians didn't have the respect they've got today. They were considered as an afterthought. The film would start off with the usual people working on it, the art director would start designing and then they'd think, "Oh my god, I suppose we do need a special effects man, after all." And they'd suddenly send out for one.

**"You need a working knowledge of engineering, electronics, pneumatics, hydraulics and explosives."**

*Bring him in for the big bang on Friday, and forget about talking things over with his unit a week, a month or more beforehand?*

Exactly. But that is one aspect of our business which is changing for the better all the time. We do now begin to get involved at an earlier stage. You find that the big movie companies — like the Bond people — learn. That they can enhance the effects and save a lot of money by getting all the people who are going to

work on a film involved long before shooting begins. Like me on this film I may be doing for Disney, they've got me involved now, giving me seventeen weeks' preparation.

*Quite obviously, everybody — every department — benefits from getting together at the drawing board stage and for the earlier discussions on a film, scene by scene.*

Definitely. I remember on *Lisztomania* (1975), I worked very closely with the designer early on. From that came other ideas which sparked off things in him, which enhanced the complete film. We're all learning, the production and the art sides are learning very rapidly.

*How would you describe your own work as a special-effects supervisor?*

Let's put it this way, you need a working knowledge of engineering, electronics, pneumatics, hydraulics, explosives, plus the experience to know when one can use foreground miniatures, matte paintings and opticals. Plus a little trickery.

*And 'trickery' adds up to what — exactly?*

(His first response is to smile only). I think it has to remain a mystery to a large extent — don't you?

Yes, I do. When I interviewed Douglas Trumbull about CE3K, etc, as much as I wanted to know how he managed everything, I also didn't want to know. I didn't want to spoil his magic for myself, let alone our readers.

Although it's probably something the general public would love to know — how we do the effects — I try never to give too much away. As Richard Donner, the Superman director, has said, the worst time for him was when he learnt there wasn't a Santa Claus. That's the sort of attitude one has to take about special effects secrets.

*Knowing as much as you do, are other sf films spoilt for you?*

Although it's nice to know how things are done, I can go to somebody else's movie and sit through it and enjoy it. Only afterwards will I try to analyse it. I can still appreciate it, and get tied up in the story, with the actors and all that, without looking for every cut in the film, every mix and wipe. Like the public, I like to go and see a movie first of all to enjoy it. If it's as successful as Superman, all the better. But I don't think they want to be told how we made him fly. Let's face it, if you say "In this scene we have him on wires . . . that one he was on a pole-arm . . ." it starts to break up the illusion. The public might well go next time and look at the film the wrong way, and be saying, "I bet he's hanging on a wire here . . . the arm there . . ." and so on.



*Who designed Hector?*

Stuart Craig, who had been John Barry's assistant on Superman, where we had all worked together, of course.

*As this was his story, John must have passed on design suggestions — drawings, doodles — to Stuart, as well.*

Oh yeah, John did slightly more than a director who had come through the art department might have done — a natural taste to do, of course. As I'm sure directors who have come through from being actors always have a fair indication of what they want to get out of an actor, because they've done it themselves. Stuart and John worked very closely together. But it was more John's input after Stuart had done a design. John

knew how he wanted it to be from a director's point of view, and so Hector is obviously flavoured from the fact that John was a good designer himself.

*How many Hectors did you have to play with?*

We had different robots for different effects. Must have been ten or twelve, in all. We only had two sets of arms, though. We worked it so they were easily detachable from one body and could be put on to other suits. We had some arms that had no works in at all — floppy arms. Then we had what we called the puppet arms — used for inserts, where all the fingers had to work. One of the main problems we had initially — because of the time thing again — was that Hector had been designed as a nice thing to look at, you know . . .

*More terrifying than functional?*

Right! So we had to — almost as we went along — to re-design around what he looked like in order to get inside him so we could actually make him do the things expected of him on the set.

*What's Hector's range? He walks, stalks, tramples, he uses arms, legs, hands, fingers . . .*

He's got hands rather like human hands, but all metal. He has certain things inside them like drills that come out, piners and cutters. And he takes something out of Farrah's eye with some tweezers built into his hand. The hands rotate, open and close. They were the biggest headache. The hand could be moved easily, and it had to be moved and sat in position. But with the hands, we had to co-ordinate three or four moves, from three people or so to make Hector pick something up. That was a problem! You had to keep going until you got it right.

*Without doing a Mel Brooks and every time he picks up a glass, he crushes it . . . Well, he does a few of those as well. But intentionally.*

*Were the hands an extension of those arm things we see used in nuclear laboratories?*

They're based on the hands used by amputees, which have a very powerful motor. They did us proud, actually. We had to extend the range of them though, which meant we were always losing power. They worked on a 30 lb pressure at so many inches from the centre of the pivot; we were extending this two or three times, which lost us power. We could adjust the power to a certain point, only. When he was supposed to snip through things, cut off people's arms and things, we had to use a bit of extra trickery to make it look as if he was more powerful than he actually was. According to the script, he had superhuman strength . . . another problem to get over.

*How did you manage to demonstrate that?*

Like in Superman really . . . you have to believe. The realm of what can be done



with hydraulics and pneumatics and so on, is still not within the capability of what some people put in their scripts. So we have to go to the other end and start making things that he's supposed to cut not as strong as they appear to be.

*Nobody said it had to be easy!*

It was also a nightmare set to work on. It's all inside two stages linked together with this mass of tunnels. It was built on the same style as a television set, inasmuch as it was a composite. Although you could float walls in and out, you had to keep within the set to a large extent, which meant everyone was forever having to move equipment to get it out of the shot!

*So you had as little room to manoeuvre*

**"It's like Superman, as I say. You either believe he can fly or you don't. And you've got to have the same attitude towards Hector."**

*in as Hector did?*

Yeah, we were always trying to find places to hide in. The whole set was built up on a rostrum, as well, which didn't help. It was an experience, running Hector on radio control and on line (power lines), with the operators on the set next to the camera.

*If the set was on stilts, as it were, couldn't you have operated Hector from underneath: electro-magnetically, for instance?*

No, they would have been restricting the director too much. He didn't really want Hector pinned down at any one point. He wanted movement. The attempts in the past to make Hector walk usually ended up with a sort of tracking system — with



Left: Harvey Keitel and his friend Hector. Each is as nutty as the other, probably something to do with the fact that they share their brainwaves.

the legs not moving at all. It was pointless trying to be clever. It's like Superman, as I say. You either believe he can fly or you don't. You've got to have the same attitude towards Hector. Think that he's a robot — and that's it!

*The film wasn't easy for you, then?*

Far from it. For me, it started off being a bit of a holiday from Superman, and if it did me no other good, it proved that you can't get complacent about being a good special effects man. After doing Superman, which was a bit of a struggle at times for many, many reasons, and then at the end of it, getting the Academy Award, there was a tendency to think you're on top of the world. Saturn 3 certainly brought me back down to

**"I did Saturn 3 because of John Barry. We all liked John. He was a very . . . inventive man. He instilled people with a lot of enthusiasm."**

earth with a bump!

*When did you first hear of the story — from John Barry during Superman, I suppose?*

Yeah, because John was the designer on Superman. I did Saturn because of John. We all liked John. He was a very . . . inventive man. He instilled people with a lot of enthusiasm from himself. It was his first kick-off as a director. My attitude was that he'd always make a good director, so let's give him a hand. If I can help him, I'll help him. That was one of my reasons for doing the film. Other than the fact that it would be a bit of a rest from Superman.

*Was that John's philosophy as well?*

He said, "Come on, we've had a hard

couple of years, come and do my movie now — it's nice and easy." Which it should have been. But to try and get this robot to do what we wanted it to turned out very different.

*Because you weren't called in early enough, you mean?*

That's my excuse! It's not an excuse, really, it's the truth.

*Any comment on John Barry being removed as director of his own project?*

I think that is best left alone now . . .

*How did you get on with Stanley Donen, not the first film-maker one associates with this genre?*

No, but sometimes that's an asset. Considering the stage at which Stanley came in, considering that the artists (*stars*) we had hadn't the best reputation for co-operation — let's put it like that — it went well. And Stanley, who I'd never worked with before as director or producer, struck me as a very creative person. He was able to make a lot out of nothing. Look at the shots of the spaceship taking-off and landing. They were very basic sets with practically nothing on them at all, especially the take-off set. But the way he chose his angles and the effects we put in for him, I was knocked out. He used that sequence for a show I did at BAFTA and I was amazed by it though I'd been on the set and seen it shot. He's got such a tremendous eye — I believe he used to be a stills photographer before he became a director.

*This is a miniature spaceship?*

No, full-size — The Lander as we called it. A great big thing, we hung it on two or three occasions on the back lot at Shepperton. It's about 18ft long. Lovely looking thing, based on insect life. Looks like a big fly's eye. It really is very nice. This is the ship Harvey Keitel arrives in at the base. You see him take off from the mothership and then land on Saturn 3, and later Kirk and Farrah try to escape in it . . . but I'm not saying anymore!

*Why not a miniature?*

They wanted Harvey to get in and out of it.

*And he refused to be miniaturised, I see.*

There's a beautiful shot of him running towards the ship, after he's killed off the opposition. And the way Stanley shot it, with the smoke and the choreography of the extras, it looks tremendous.

*Hector, apart, it's quite rare to make one of your effects full-size.*

It wasn't that big really. A two-man Lander was quite easy . . . Well, it wasn't easy to make or to operate. To me it looked fairly boring on the set, except the ship itself did look impressive. But

the way Stanley staged and directed it was amazing. Very clever use of people and camera.

*Let's get back to old Hector. If you had so many options for operating him, why did you also need someone inside the body from time to time?*

The thing you can't do is make him walk. The radio control and the power-line is for the arms and all the bits and pieces. It would not have been worth the cost to have even attempted to put enough equipment inside to make him walk. Considering the head and the back-pack weighed something like 65lbs, he'd have to balance and not topple over. We're not trying to make a robot that can walk. We're trying to make a robot that looks as if it can walk. This is where the trickery of the special effects man and the film industry comes in. To make it look like a robot, moving as easily and as economically as possible. There's just no need to spend £60,000 on making a robot that can walk, just to prove how clever you are . . . when you can get a guy inside it to do it for you.

*Who walked him?*

A very tall guy. He was a dancer, which made him fit enough to cart Hector around. Must have been quite an experience to be inside him. Even the empty Hector suit would weigh about 150 to 200 lbs. Somehow we never talked about the guy inside. Hector was his name, all the time. It was "Get Hector on the set". Never, "Get Peter in the Suit." Just "Get Hector . . ." He became quite an endearing character in the end.

*That's not quite the right idea, is it!*

**"Kirk Douglas was all for it. He is, by the very nature of the films he's done, a very active person and he just loved every minute of Saturn 3."**

Not really, but everyone on the film liked him a lot.

*Chris Reeve obviously had to take a great interest in your effects for him, but were the Saturn stars interested in the workings of Hector?*

Very much so. Kirk loved him . . . I remember when we were doing the sequence where Hector has been knocked out by an overcharge of electricity and begins coming back to life. Kirk and Harvey are trying to pin him down, to stop him getting up again. We built a pneumatic cylinder rig for Hector to start lifting himself up and start throwing himself about. Kirk has to throw himself over the robot on the floor. We started pumping these hydraulics into Hector —

throwing Kirk all over the place! And he loved it! He said, "This is where the fun starts!" He was all for it. Kirk, by the very nature of the films he's done, is an active person and he just loved every minute of it.

*Well, it's been a long while since he battled hydraulics in 20,000 Leagues Under The Sea...*

He was really enjoying himself. Acting is his business, but he also likes to be able to react to something.

*But didn't they realise that Hector is obviously going to steal their show?*

I don't know whether they worry about that. Surely, Lord Lew doesn't sell the show on Hector, but Farrah.

**"Put two people in front of Hector, talking, and you could move his head from side to side as if he was listening."**

*No comment. You mentioned Hector's head. He looks headless in the picture I've seen...*

His head was on a stalk, a double stalk, which was a parallelogram... so his head never tilts. He lifts it up and swivels it around. It stays level all the time, although he can twist it around. There are lights inside it — supposed to be a camera there as well and sensors. The funny thing was, although it was utterly inhuman, it was the thing you always looked at. If he was operating the stage, and looking at somebody, we got the feeling that he was sort of tipping his head to look at something. The head itself began to take on human form. Put two people in front of him, talking, and you could move the head from side to side as if he was listening. We used about four or five channels of the radio control just on his head alone, to give him the utmost amount of movement. If he felt annoyed, he could shake his head, or nod... and it made him more frightening to think that he could follow you around the room with his head. He's a sly, nasty character, really.

*Not based, of course, on anyone in the film business!*

Oh no! He's not motivated purely by instinct. He's not programmed in the same manner as a computer. He has got this humanoid brain. I mean, the story is that Harvey Keitel, who plays the baddie, is mad, and the robot, when it is put together on Saturn 3, is programmed from a pick-up in the back of Harvey's head. So when Harvey starts falling in love with Farrah Fawcett, the robot also falls for her — because he's getting the input from Harvey's brain. When Harvey starts getting nasty, when he realises

he's getting the brush-off from Farrah and Kirk's not too happy about it either, the robot then takes exception to them, too. In the end, Hector starts to think for itself and starts to take exception to Harvey as well, and does him in.

*How does Hector compare with the other robots in movies.*

Robots are like people. They seem to have different characters. I loved the robots in *Star Wars*, both of them — for entirely different reasons. The little round one — is that C3PO? No, it's R2-D2 — has got a lovely little character and yet didn't look a bit humanoid, while the other one looked totally humanoid. But as villains go, Hector's probably the best. Above everything else, he's the nastiest one. Hector is more human than a robot, thinks like a human being, devious like a human being — pre-thinking what the others might do. It's like a big chess game, really. There is a chess game in the film, actually. Hector is quite a complex character when you think about it.

*What's Hector's best scene?*

The biggest scene, I suppose, is the end where they finally destroy Hector. If they do destroy him... I'll say no more.

*So there's a Hector II film in the offing?*

I think they're keeping their options open. They've not scrapped him yet... I believe he's going to be among the attractions in The Palladium Cellars.

*Let's hope they can keep him under control there! Now the obvious final question: What's happening next?*

I wish I knew... I have a flock of offers, Spielberg's *Raiders of the Lost Ark*, which is set in the 30s... John Boorman's *Merlin*... Ridley Scott's *Knight*... another George Lucas production, *The Dragon Slayers*... and Disney's new one, *Cordman*. I don't know which one to do.

**"I'm due to tour America with Saturn 3, and then I have other big things planned, such as the new company in Canada."**

*Nice position to be in.*

Yes, it is. I'd say the Disney film is favourite, but we'll see. I'm also due to tour America with Saturn 3, and then I've other big things planned, such as the new company in Canada.

*You're extending your company, Effects Associates, Toronto, I gather.*

I'm not even a company, really. I'm just a self-employed special-effects man. The company is for Canada, really — Effects Associates Canada. My other partners in

that are Martin Gutteridge (Dracula, Silver Dream Racer, The Lady Vanishes, Hanover Street, The Sweeney, Quatermass, The Professionals, etc) and Roy Whybrow (Battle of Britain, Lawrence of Arabia, Bear Island, Murphy's War, 11 Harrow House, Dr Frankenstein, The Legend of Hell House, Zulu, Help etc). Between us, we have more than 60 years experience in the effects field. And Roy Field, is also associated with us (another Superman Oscar-winner for his optical effects work). We plan to be involved in the features over there, television movies and commercials, and provide a facility for both local and visiting effects

**"I've got my own life to live which I've got to plan. I've now come to what I feel is a critical point in my career."**

technicians.

*We're going to lose you, you mean! How can we keep you down on the farm after you've seen Oscar?*

I'd like to maintain a home...

But...?

Well, I've got my own life to live, which I've got to plan. I've now come to what I feel is a critical stage in my career. That sounds silly after getting an Academy Award, but I mean my life, my working life, more than my career. I don't want to stagnate. If I stay the next 20 or 25 years as a special effects man, there's only one way to go and that's down. I mean, we're always going to get the youngsters coming up. So I've got to look somewhere else and see if I can expand my ambitions somewhere else, other than in special-effects. I can't leave the film industry. I can't do anything else other than movies.

*You want to be a director, I take it?*

I'd like to direct second-unit and action sequences yes, that would give me more of a rein. It's a feasible thought. I did a lot of direction on *Superman I and II*, because as the assistant director says, 'If there's a special-effects scene to be done, it's not the director who does it — but the special-effects man. He knows where people should be.' I've an art school training... I keep my eyes and ears open as far as watching for directors, both the good and the bad. And I feel I can do it. I just need someone to give me the chance.

**Next issue: Colin Chivers talks about Superman II (and 1)... more about his future plans... and how he (and therefore you too?) broke into special-effects in the first place. "Not," as he warns, "easy."**

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# STARBUST FILM PREVIEW DEATHWATCH

BY TONY CRAWLEY



**T**he story takes place tomorrow. "It's therefore science fiction," says director Bertrand Tavernier. The setting is a big town. It doesn't really matter where. It happens to be Glasgow, but that's because Tavernier liked the look of the town and the countryside.

At first glance, therefore, things haven't changed much. They don't by tomorrow. Cars, busy streets, buildings, concrete monstrosities, rich, poor, luxury, slums. It's the same old story. But something vital has changed. People don't die anymore from disease. Old age will carry them off, maybe the odd bullet or a drunken driver. But ill-health is a thing of the past. Of today. It's gone, eradicated.

Television is still popular. One new show is top of the charts. It's a news programme. New news. La mort en direct, it's called, like Tavernier's prize-winning film. It means quite simply: Death shown live. And so . . . **Deathwatch.**

The next stenze of the programme is going to topple all the ratings. A woman is going to die in full view of the cameras . . .

She is Romy Schneider as Katherine. She has contracted some kind of illness, she has three weeks to live. And the tv company went to shoot it all. From beginning to end. She naturally rejects the company's offer. She wants to die with some grace — peacefully, privately, away from prying eyes, peeping toms and camera lenses.

Later, she appears to change her mind. She asks for half her fee immediately. She is, of course, preparing to take the money and run. To keep her death to herself.

The tv boss realises this and sends Roddy, his director, after her. Just Roddy alone. Roddy will do, you see. He has already sold his soul to this medie. And his eyes. He has a mini tv-camera implanted in his head. Everything his eyes see is automatically transmitted, videotaped, tele-cast.

Roddy is I Am A Camera for real.

I'll leave the story there . . . for now.

It's time to explain that the French do not

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**Bertrand Tavernier does not make farces. He makes films. Marvellous movies. Five in four years and award winners all.**

---

often make sf movies. The last one, if such it can truly be labelled, was last year's no 2 film at the Paris box-office. A Louis de Funes comedy called *Le Gendarme et les extra-terrestres*. It hardly needs translation does it? It does? Okey — *The Policeman and the Extra-Terrestrials* (or UFOs). The Gendarme films with de Funes are, if you will, on a par with your Carry On films. Asinine farces. But this one happened to attract more audiences in Paris than *Apocalypse Now*, *Moonraker*, *Superman*, *Alien* or *Manhattan*!

Bertrand Tavernier, however, does not make farces. He makes films. Marvellous movies. Five in four years. Award-winners all. Like The

Watchmaker of Saint-Paul (1973) and The Judge and the Assassin (1975). They were all in French. *Deathwatch*, however, is shot in English, and apart from starring France's favourite West German import, Romy Schneider (Romy, not Last Tango's Marie, so don't get too excited), the film boasts a far more international cast than the usual Tavernier (or indeed French) films.

The TV boss, cynical dangerous, is Harry Dean Stanton, from *Alien*. Roddy the men-cum-camera, is Harvey Keitel from *Saturn 3*, where he was a man-cum-robot. And Romy Schneider's ex-husband in the film is Sweden's Max von Sydow, alias The Exorcist and now Ming the Merciless in Mike Hodges' *Flash*

*Deathwatch* is no ordinary French film. It is, come to that, no ordinary science fiction film. No vast special effects.

Gordon (see report on page 20, this issue).

These actors, therefore, are well versed in science-fiction – or shall we say, commercial fantasy. In *Deathwatch*, they meet science-fiction for real for once... in an amazing movie from David Compton's American novel, scripted by Tavernier and David Rayfield, the scannist of Robert Redford's *Jeremiah Johnson* and *Three Days of the Condor*.

In other words, this is no ordinary French film. It is, come to that, no ordinary film either. No robotricks, no gimmicks, no vast special effects – just heaps of fuel for what is all about. The mind... the imagination.

Back now to the scenario: Roddy is disgusted by the trick he is playing on his victim, Katherine. He is, in effect, stealing her death. He wants to confess but cannot. Finally, one night, he closes his eyes long enough to disconnect all the circuits to the camera in his head. This makes him blind – and finally he tells her all.

Back at the tv HQ, Vincent is furious. Contact has been lost. He begins a manhunt to locate the two fugitives – lovers, in fact, by now. They're making for the home of her first husband. Police are everywhere – cars helicopters.

And the truth finally dawns on us. The whole episode is a fake. Vincent bribed the doctor. Katherine is not ill. But the drugs given her could kill her unless (as Vincent intended without telling Roddy) she was rescued in time – for a spellbinding finish to the tv show.

The hunt becomes a matter of life and death not only for Katherine, but everyone...

This time I will leave it there... in order to talk to the men behind the film, Bertrand Tavernier.

*Why did you shoot your film in English – to get into the American market?*

No, I wanted to work on a language which isn't mine, a very science-fiction type of writing, and very Anglo-Saxon. David Rayfield went beyond my fondest hopes for the scenario. Not only

did he de-gadgetise the sf aspect of David Compton's novel, but he did a really poetic job of work. His scenario is full of secondary background and zone of shade – a wonderful springboard for the director. In fact, it was when Joe Losey saw *Deathwatch*, that he decided to work with David on his next movie, *Silences*.

*Your 'tomorrow' is very close to today...*

Extremely near... But it is still science fiction, even if some of the facts in the future we describe already belong to the present. The tv programme, for example, already exists. It's called *Lifetime* and is financed by Rank Xerox in America. It shows real operations which may end with the death of the patient.

*Harvey's camera grafted to his brain is rather close to Hector the robot also operated by his brain in Saturn 3.*

But three pages in a recent *Newsweek* magazine told us that several surgeons have decided to use this camera-grafting process to cure blindness in America.

*Ah!*

So, in the same way that, in my historical films, I tried to show how history can be related to the present without deforming it, here I wanted to talk about the future in the present. No robots. No gadgets. In fact, in the finest compliment I've ever received, Theodore Sturgeon said *Deathwatch* was "an impassioned and sensual fable about liberty, a love story in which even suicide seems like a declaration of passion, an emotional suspense which affects us all."

*So you also see it as a love story?*

It's lyrical and violent, without the traditional love-scenes, without chases or fights. But we have hidden, underground violence, the kind which exploits or disrupts people – the kind we find in *Deathwatch* – and that's just as dangerous, isn't it? The movie is also a fable, not only of voyeurism, but also a comment on the profession (I'd like to say, the moral attitude) of tv directors.

*Death as a ratings winner!*

*"In this tv programme of ours, in which the dead people are dramatic entertainment, the horror is still present."*

Philippe Aries noted that death has replaced pornography in what was forbidden from us. Everything in our civilisation teaches us to hide the last moments, to gloss them over. The dying man must find an acceptable way of experiencing his death and *Deathwatch* – which seems to attack this taboo – in fact strengthens it. In this tv programme of ours, in which the dead people are dramatic entertainment, the horror is still present... like in those movies which pretend to denounce violence but where blood flows in every shot.

*How was the shooting in Scotland?*

Exhausting! Eight weeks for more than 60 settings... and with terribly trying weather. I

think we held out thanks to Pierre William Glenn, my cinematographer. He had the whole unit jogging a mile every morning at 7 am! You were very fortunate with your cast – that the two Americans were in Europe just when you needed them. Particularly that the wonderful Harvey Keitel was here. How did you get along? He is reputed to be a very difficult actor.

Harvey Keitel is a very demanding actor. He needs lots of explanations and expects a great deal from the director. He comes on the set with many ideas: some of them are good, others not. It's your job to convince him which are best. Then he's an actor who works 24 hours out of 24 hours.

*"Deathwatch produced in the American style would have cost ten times as much... I don't need a sledgehammer to kill a fly."*

For his blind scenes, he went to film blind people with a video camera, and studied their eyes and hands, their way of walking. Then, he worked on the character by filming himself acting the blind man's role, and comparing the two. He then asked my advice and corrected his acting after we'd discussed it. He's continually seeking perfection.

*How would you describe his character, Roddy?*

Infantile... corrupted by his passion for the camera. He believes he's been given the finest type of toy. In breaking his playing, he accomplishes an act of love... rather like Karl Boehm, the hero of Michael Powell's *Peeping Tom*, when he tells the woman he loves: "Never ask me to photograph you."

*There are strong similarities with Peeping Tom in Deathwatch.*

Yes, the Powell film also talks about death – death which is hidden or over-exploited... which comes to the same thing really.

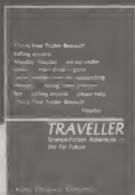
*'Deathwatch is doing very well here in Paris, and you've already picked up a Unifrance Foreign Press award for it – will you stay with science-fiction... ?*

My next film, *Une semaine de vacances* (A Week on Holiday) will be both the complete opposite to *Deathwatch*, and in a way, an extension of it... but it's not science-fiction. Will you be heading towards an American career shortly?

No, absolutely not! In the first place, I want to maintain my roots. In the second, I don't want to get involved in the infernal cycle of American competition. I date the relationship which exists between American film-makers and their producers and the world of Los Angeles. I don't want to be a victim of the dictatorship of money and profit-earning criteria... *Deathwatch* produced in the American style, would have cost ten times as much and would have necessitated a technical team which any director would find terribly unwieldy... I don't need a sledgehammer to kill a fly.

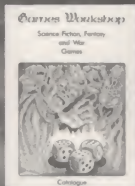
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I want to talk to you seriously about the importance of undersea ducks and giant chickens in science fantasy films.

In 1870, Jules Verne published *Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea* with its famous anti-hero Captain Nemo. Five years later, he published a sequel *The Mysterious Island*, with Captain Nemo again appearing in a central role. The book was written partly because Verne wanted to explain who the mysterious Captain Nemo actually was and partly because he admired both *Robinson Crusoe* and *The Swiss Family Robinson*. Verne saw his *Mysterious Island* as an attempt to create "the Robinsons of science". His starting-point was taken from the dramatic use of balloons to escape from the Siege of Paris in 1870-1871.

Verne's story starts towards the end of the American Civil War, when five Union prisoners escape from Richmond in a balloon. A storm takes them right (or, rather, left) across the American continent to a desert island in the Pacific. Verne had been impressed by Fingal's Cave in the Hebridean islands and there are echoes of that type of landscape in the book. Eventually, after several mysterious incidents, they discover that this Pacific island is the secret hideaway of Captain Nemo who, it turns out, is really an Indian noble called Prince Dakkar.

Now we have to jump to the 20th Century.

In 1916, underwater photographer J. Ernest Williamson had made a successful silent movie of *Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea* (directed by Stuart Paton). Williamson wanted to follow this up with Verne's own sequel *The Mysterious Island* and MGM became interested. But then he ran into problems with the studio. As he later explained: "I was to learn that Jules Verne hadn't written a story big enough for this Hollywood crowd. It must be something more than that, something larger, something BIG. And the Abraham Lincoln atmosphere (of the original book) with its Civil War characters was definitely out. For technical reasons, the story was now to be laid in Russia. Captain Nemo was to be Russian; the whole cast were to be Russian".

Eventually, after two years of research and writing, Maurice Tourneur was appointed as director. (He later directed Nick Carter, *Master Detective* and his son was horror specialist Jacques Tourneur.) Williamson and a crew set off to the Bahamas in 1926 to start shooting location material and underwater scenes. But, almost as soon as they started filming, a hurricane struck. Most of the boats and equipment were wrecked and the expedition was abandoned. Tourneur left as director after a clash with MGM's 'boy wonder' executive Irving Thalberg. (Tourneur had refused to work with a 'producer' — a new post invented by Thalberg.)

(The ducks and chickens are coming, don't worry.)

In 1927, *The Mysterious Island* was taken up by Danish director Benjamin Christensen (a former opera singer and

# A STARBUST MYSTERIOUS

John Fleming takes a trip back in time to examine





wine merchant best known for his 1921 film *Witchcraft Through the Ages*. Starring as the young hero Nikolai was actor Marc McDermott. But, halfway through shooting, McDermott died.

All the material shot with McDermott had to be abandoned and actor Lloyd Hughes was brought in to replace him. Christensen was replaced as director by Clarence Brown (who had been Maurice Tourneur's assistant since 1914 and who later went sentimental, directing five Garbo films, *National Velvet* and *The Yearling*). Brown walked off *The Mysterious Island* after a row with Thalberg and refused directorial credit.

Scriptwriter Lucien Hubbard was brought in. (He had written *The Perils of Pauline* in 1914 and went on to produce Nick Carter, *Master Detective* in 1939) He got final credit as director. So, at last, the massive production was over. MGM

had their expensive and much-troubled silent movie shot, edited, completed and ready for release. Then the Talkies arrived. The film was shelved.

Another two years passed. MGM sound engineer Douglas Shearer (brother of actress Norma Shearer and brother-in-law to Thalberg) got together with Arthur Lange and Martin Broones. Sound effects were erratically added onto the completed film and Lucien Hubbard was brought back to add some dialogue sequences.

At last, in 1929, *The Mysterious Island* was released. It had cost 1,130,000 dollars to make and lost 878,000 dollars on release. Frankly, I'm not surprised. I've seen odd films and I've seen odder films and this is a 100% looney of the deep.

The film is set in the kingdom of Hetvia; there is disorder in the kingdom and revolution is brewing. The revolting peasants (dressed like Russians) are being oppressed by the hussars (dressed like Cossacks). Off the coast lies Count Dakkar's (ie Captain Nemo's) heavily-guarded (ie mysterious) island. Then, three minutes into the film, without warning, rhyme or reason, there's a bashing, clashing, metallic noise. The soundtrack has started. Count Dakkar rises from the depths in a bathysphere.

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# SF CLASSIC IS ISLANDS

two film version of Jules Verne's classic novel.



## Mysterious Island (1926-29)

Lionel Barrymore (as Captain Nemo/Count Dakkar), Jane Daly (Countess Sonia), Lloyd Hughes (Nikolai), Montagu Love (Baron Falon), Harry Gribbon (Mikhail), Snitz Edwards (Anton), Gibson Gowland (Dmitry), Dolores Brinkman (Teresa).  
Directed by Lucien Hubbard, Clarence Brown, Maurice Tourneur and Benjamin Christensen, Screenplay by Lucien Hubbard, Photographed by Percy Hilburn, Underwater Photography by J. Ernest Williamson, Edited by Carl L. Pierson, Music by Martin Broones and Arthur Lange, Art Director Cedric Gibbons, Sound by Douglas Shearer, Technical Effects by James Basevi, Louis H. Tolhurst and Irving Ries, Produced by Hunt Stromberg, MGM Pictures.

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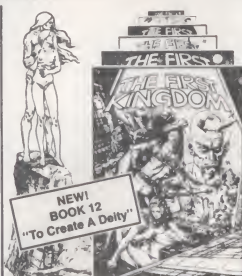


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equality. The island is, in fact, a partially-submerged volcano which sucks up water "from a world no man has seen - The deepest part of the sea". He believes that another species, a "distant cousin" of mankind, has developed a deep sea culture parallel with the human surface culture. So he is building a craft to go to the bottom of the ocean to have a close encounter. His evil friend Baron Falon envisages an armed vessel - "With that, we could conquer the world!" But Dakkar is a man of peace.

The plot develops with caption boards, silent passages, sudden bursts of clanking, bubbling; hissing, silent patches, brief snatches of non-synchronised dialogue and yet more silent passages.

The Baron's hussars take over the Count's island and, when the submarine surfaces, attack it with cannon-fire. (Actually, it sounds more like bits of wood being hit together.) The forces of good and evil chase each other to the bottom of the ocean, where they see a huge, floating, hairy spider and then meet "the people of the abyss". These "distant cousins" of mankind turn out to be thousands of little Donald Duck munchkins (played by Hollywood midgets in costume who occasionally "swam" with the aid of piano wire). They pull the first submarine to arrive through their underwater city and try to force their way in with a giant battering ram. The noise created (underwater?) by this attack brings out a gigantic undersea reptile and the thousands of Donald Ducks flee in panic. The submarine fires torpedoes at the monster, killing it. The humans put on their samurai sword-type weapons and their huge metal diving suits (making them look like a cross between medieval knights and Robby the Robot) and go outside to be worshipped as gods by the relieved ducks.

Above left: Captain Nemo (Herbert Lom) comes ashore after a refreshing stroll on the sea bed. Above right: Captain Cyrus Harding (Michael Craig) pokes a rhino-sized bee with a stick in an effort to drive it away. Right: Yet more stick-poking. This time it is Cyrus Harding and his crew who take on a crab the size of an elephant. Ray Harryhausen animated the crab but not the actors.

The second submarine then arrives. The good Count and the evil Baron fight it out on the seabed. The Baron is killed and his warm blood spills out into the cold sea, maddening the ducks, who appear to have vampiric tendencies. The ducks release a huge "slug monster" (which looks more like the squid from *Twenty Thousand Leagues*), but the forces of good escape and re-take Mysterious Island from the Baron's men. Good triumphs over evil, love over hate and Lionel Barrymore gets to do a slow and lingering death scene. Everything you could want.

The Mysterious Island is a considerable shock to the viewer's system. Especially the ears, as he can never quite be sure when the next unlikely and often irrelevant sound effect will be unleashed. It's also a shock to the viewer's logic faculties, particularly in the film's latter stages when monsters disappear without explanation, ships blow up without explanation and Barrymore acts without restraint. But it is all wonderfully silly.

So much so, that there were re-makes. A Russian version directed in 1941 by E.A. Penzline and B.M. Chelintzev. A fifteen-part Columbia serial directed by Spencer Bennett in 1952. And the more famous 1961 version directed by Cy Endfield, with effects by Ray Harryhausen. It was the third film shot in Dynamation.



This production, too, was a bit of a saga. Ray Harryhausen explains: "We were presented with a script by Columbia Pictures. They had started the picture some years before and, of course, we re-wrote the plot to incorporate Dynamation subjects." In fact, the story returns to the Jules Verne original for its opening, with a group of Union soldiers escaping from a Confederate prison by balloon and being blown by a violent storm to a mysterious Pacific island. There they meet two shipwrecked women, a crab measuring 19 ft from claw to claw, bees as big as rhinos, the traditional Verne squid and a 20 ft high chicken. Or, at any rate, a large bird.

Harryhausen explains: "It was a pre-historic Phorohacos but, owing to script deletions, its antediluvian origin was discarded. Most reviewers and audiences assumed it to be an overgrown chicken."

The stars included Michael Craig, an Indian-born Briton raised in Canada, who was cast as a Union Army officer with a Yankee accent. And Cockney Percy Herbert was cast as a Southerner.



The locations were just as confused. Parts of the film were shot at Manzarene in Central Spain, the Tryhenian sea coast of Italy, the Bocca del Anza near Madrid, Mount Etna in Sicily, the coastline near Alicante and (for the 'master shot' of the island as seen from the balloon) the West Indies. But a major part of the special effects scenes were shot on the beach at S'Agaro on the Costa Brava (the same beach Harryhausen and producer Charles H. Schneer had used for *The 7th Voyage of Sinbad* in 1958 and *The Three Worlds of Gulliver* in 1959).

This all proved rather confusing for the tourists and residents. Schneer created a lagoon by building a reef across a small curve of the beach. Occasionally, tourists would wander down to the beach and find huge boulders which had not been there the previous day. One morning, they found full-size coconut palms had suddenly grown on the beach; later in the day, the palm trees had moved to new locations. And, on another day, a huge section of a 100 ft cliff, complete with caves, suddenly arrived.

The story itself is almost tame in comparison with the mental anguish the tourists must have gone through. It's an everyday story of shipwrecked heroines and balloon-wrecked heroes battling pirates and being helped by a mad but altruistic scientist who is trying to end warfare by increasing the world's food supply using genetic experimentation. Of course, he has a few setbacks — there's

**Producer Schneer created a lagoon by building a reef across a small curve of beach.**

the attack of the crabs, the demented chicken and the rhino-sized bee that seals our hero and heroine into its honeycomb. But all ends well with the traditional volcanic explosion and Captain Nemo dying a hero's death trapped in his underwater grotto.

The only thing I sometimes wonder is what Jules Verne thinks of all this up there, watching that great videoscreen in the sky.



Top left: Cyrus Harding (Michael Craig), aboard the *Nautilus*, provides a little music for his escort. Top right: Captain Nemo (Herbert Lom) offers Cyrus Harding a glass of wine. Above left: Cyrus Harding and his crew hide in the caves producer Schneer had built for the occasion. Above: Elena (Beth Rogan) helps Cyrus Harding up the beach of the Mysterious Island.

### Mysterious Island (1961)

Herbert Lom (*as Captain Nemo*), Joan Greenwood (*Lady Mary Fairchild*), Michael Craig (*Captain Cyrus Harding*), Gary Merrill (*Gideon Spillett*), Michael Callan (*Herbert Brown*), Beth Rogan (*Elena*), Percy Herbert (*Sergeant Pencroft*), Dan Jackson (*Neb*), Nigel Green (*Tom*).

Directed by Cy Endfield. Screenplay by John Prebble, Daniel Uffman and Crane Wilbur. Photographed by Wilkie Cooper. Underwater photography by Egil Woxholt. Edited by Frederick Wilson. Art Director Bill Andrews. Music by Bernard Hermann. Visual Effects by Ray Harryhausen. Produced by Charles H. Schneer. Columbia Pictures.

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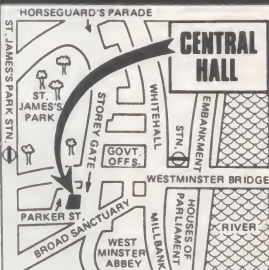
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# BOOK WORLD/RECORD WORLD

THE PENTATEUCH by Patrick Woodruffe and David Greenslade

## Record review by Mat Irvine

Years ago when there were on, two types of records, those by the Beatles and those by everyone else, the term "concept album" would not have meant very much. Your 12 inch diameter, 33 rpm disc, pressed in conservative black vinyl (only children's records used coloured plastic) would contain a number of tracks, the connection between each would only be that they were performed, you assumed, by the same group.

However in 1967 along came a revolution with the Beatles *Sgt Pepper* album, regarded by many as the first concept album, although at the same time the Moody Blues also re-emerged with what I personally regard as being the first record of this variety, *The Days of Future Past*.

I'm not sure exactly how to define a concept album, or for that matter whether it needs a definition. In recent years with albums in general getting more and more lavish (and expensive), an sf influence started to appear on many album covers even if the artists themselves, or their music, had no automatic connection with the genre. Yes, Boston and E.L.O. spring to mind and also Hawkwind with their connection with Michael Moorcock. Even more recently it has been discovered that the field of fantasy and sf is an ideal medium to produce package that is something more than just a record. The most famous example is probably Jeff Wayne's musical version of *The War of the Worlds*. Conceived as a double album the buyer not only got the two records but also a series of paintings in a centre section. The Pentateuch goes one stage further. With *The War of the Worlds*, the records dominated, with the Greenslade/Woodruffe combination, the literary side is definitely to the fore producing what is in effect a book plus two records, although the whole appearance takes on the look of a boxed record set.

The composer, Dave Greenslade has been in the music business for many years, starting with Chris Farlow and the Thunderbirds. He progressed through the



group Colosseum and then formed his own band, Greenslade. These days he tends to concentrate on writing television themes (Gangsters, etc) and producing his own albums. Greenslade's contribution to The Pentateuch follows the book outline to a large extent, although whether one feels that the mood of a particular piece of music matches its appropriate artwork will inevitably be a matter of personal taste. The music titles mostly follow the titles of the paintings, but in the cases where they differ, a list at the end of the book sorts this out.

The music is, in the main, performed on electronic instruments, with the addition of a grand piano, vibraphone, church organ and tubular bells and on many of the tracks Dave Greenslade is joined by one or both of two percussionists, Phil Collins and John Lingwood.

The first record opens with *Introit*, the awakening of God and, to quote the painting title, *The Creation of the First Stars*. The stars appear as eyes in the painting and the music mimics the tears, being played very high on one of the synthesizers in a very tinkling fashion. In a true creation mood the track ends with a suitable soaring chord.

I tried to find a clever musical

connection between the next track and its artwork, as the latter is called *The Creation of the Earth and Seven Moons* (the music is just *Moondance*), but I couldn't detect anything in 7 times, but then again its not the easiest of the rhythms to keep to! *Beltempest*, the first living thing God creates, features on track 3 and his theme reappears twice on side 2. His colleague, *Glass*, has his arrival during track 4 and in true chauvinistic fashion the girls do not appear until the last track of side 1, the music end artwork matching in titles, *Three Brides*.

Side 2 opens with some of the resulting offspring, *Birds, Bats and Dragonflies* and is suitably light and fluffy. This children's theme continues with the next track, *Nursery Hymn*, with the synthesised voice of Greenslade's 2½ year old daughter, *Kate*, added to the score.

The painting *The Minstrel* features a person with what looks like a large mandoline played with a bow and the music, track 3 and with the same title, opens and closes with what sounds suspiciously like a guitar being tuned, although it's probably a synthesiser.

Track 4, *Fresco* opens with an electronic wind effect which

seems to match the artwork. It is a short track and leads directly into *Kashrin*, a name shared with winged creatures with a tendency to play long pipes. This is also a short track and quickly ends up in track 5, *Barcarole*, which is the nearest the record becomes to having a "hit tune" in the charts sense. The main theme is the repeat of *Beltempest*, side 1, track 3, but this time it has had words added. Synthesised through a vocoder they are difficult to distinguish in places, but they appear to generally match this section of the story although by no means are they a direct repeat of any of the text.

The words basically tell of the men of this particular earth setting forth on the sea to find dry land, which is in fact the next track, *Dry Land* being the title of both music and art. During this track the *Beltempest/Barcarole* theme, and words, are reprised.

If *Barcarole* is the A side of this potential single, I suppose the opening track of the second record could be the B side. The music goes under the name of *Forest Kingdom* which matches the actual illustration exactly. (The painting, though, is entitled *Peace the Happy Savage*).

Track 2, *Vivat Regina* (*Woman*, in the artwork) starts a bit like a Scerletti sonnet on the harpsicord, but with a beat. Track 3 is called *Scream But not Heard* end starts just like that with one of *The Three Brides*, *Ildrin* turning a bit nasty and having started her *Mischief* (track 4) the whole lot soon turns into *War*, the last track of side 3 end stretching over 3 pages of artwork.

The last side of the records opens with the aftermath of the *War* and the track entitled *Lament for the Sea*. (The artwork is *Dead Glass*). A suitable solemn piece which sounds as if it should have been played on the church organ, but probably wasn't. Track 2, *Miasma Generator* (*The Death of Air*) soon changes this mood with a vengeance as *Ildrin* decides to destroy the air as well as the water creatures.

*Exile*, the next track, has the fleet of vessels being readied for their journey. The music takes on a suitably special approach during

this track end ends with what is presumably the rocket engines firing. The penultimate track is *Jubilate*, (A Worth Destiny according to the pointing), and here it seems the church organ is appropriately used.

The records end on a mystic note with *The Tiger and the Dove* and it forms the most enigmatic piece in the whole score, feeding away like *Holst's Neptune*.

Overall, Dave Greenlede's Pentateuch is not as immediately recognisable as other contemporary compositions such as *Tubular Bells* or *Vangelis's Spiral*. It is more one of those pieces that grows on you, needing several listenings to start to appreciate the whole.

Taking the two items in this package, the music and the art, both stand up on their own. You can, for example, listen to the music without having ever seen the paintings. However with technology being what it is and video discs very nearly upon us, with costs cheaper than VTRs, concept albums such as this would fit very nicely into this "new" audiovisual medium. I therefore predict that EMI's first video disc could very well be a re-issue of the Greenlede/Woodroffe partnership — The Pentateuch of the Cosmogony.

### Book Review by Alex Carpenter

I first became aware of this hardback record's (long-playing book's?) existence when Patrick Woodroffe's superb cover caught my eye in my local record shop. Being a sucker for fantasy art, good music and "collectables" I immediately bought a copy and headed homeward to see what I'd added to my collection.

On the journey home I had time to reflect that I didn't much care for care for Mr Woodroffe's art style! His work is usually a little too surreal for my tastes but I put my mind to rest by confirming that the cover was just about the best piece of work I had ever seen by that artist. The rest of the book would be just as good...

Dave Greenlede's double album goes under the stylus whilst I sit back to peruse the book. Suddenly, I'm not too sure I've bought what I thought I had! The artwork is a riot of Woodroffe et al — for me — his worst but I suppress my anxiety and plunge into the text.

Synthesisers, minimoogs and a veritable horde of other keyboards of every description pour electronic sounds from the stereo speakers and I settle down deeper in my chair.

Patrick Woodroffe has put a lot of effort into this work, in many ways it can be considered a *tour-de-force*, for his artwork is a perfect complement to the text. The "larger than life" aspects of his art which I usually find so annoying take a different aspect when looked at in the light of the book as an entirety. For The Pentateuch (pronounced pentatuk) is an interpretation of an alien bible and it would be unreasonable to expect the illustrations to be "earth-bound".

During the latter half of the 24th century, a derelict spacecraft is discovered in orbit about Saturn. Among the many items discovered on board was a "library" and this book is a translation (or more accurately an interpretation) of one of the items contained in that part of the ship.

Cosmogony is the (theory of) the creation of the universe and The Pentateuch is the first five books of the Old Testament thus we have a bible of sorts but, in this case, one that owes nothing to this mudball on which we live.

As could be expected of an ancient bible, the text is of a flowery nature and couched in allegories. Patrick Woodroffe has not only had to "construct" this alien Genesis but has also taken the trouble to produce the ideograms in which it was originally "written". This additional flourish, together with the notes of one of the linguistic experts involved in the translation, makes the whole thing seem that much more authentic.

Forty-eight pages — almost entirely in colour — end my mind is made up; I didn't make a mistake — this will make an excellent addition to my collection.

So here I sit with two LPs and a full colour hardback book and I can't help but be impressed by the time and care that has obviously gone into the entire production. Perhaps the illustrations and the music are not completely to my liking but overall I am satisfied. Hopefully it will be a success and then others may follow.

Published by *Dragon's World/distributed by E.M.I. Records 12"* x 12" 48 pages. Price £8.99

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WE LOOK AT THE SCIENCE  
OF MINIATURE MODEL  
CONSTRUCTION, AND THE  
MANY DIFFERENT TYPES  
OF MATERIALS THAT  
CAN BE USED.



## IRVINE © Pa MODEL





# W EFFECTS

## Part 3:

## BUILDING



If there is one question that prevails at the lectures or conventions that I have attended it is "what are the models made from?" The usual reply to this is "anything and everything". As an overall statement this is basically true, but obviously some materials tend to predominate. Not surprisingly, these days, it is plastics that tend to make up 90% of the average — if such a term can be used — film miniature.

This was not always the case and even relatively recently it was probably wood, in a multitude of types, that dominated; with card, fibreglass, perspex and assorted metals finding their way, in various proportions, into the construction.

Model making is by no means a new art. Man has been carving miniatures out of wood and other natural materials for thousands of years and film and tv miniatures are only a variation of what the hobbyist will make at home. However, there are some vital differences and a meticulous amateur modeller will not necessarily make a good professional builder of miniatures. Likewise a professional modeller in one aspect of the field, say architectural or museum models, will not necessarily be able to switch his — or her — talents over to the film and television side of the business. But of course, note the "necessarily", for everyone has to start somewhere.

Once a design for a model has been settled on, the next problem is working out exactly what it will be required to do. This should tell one if a single model will be adequate or whether different scales are required and it should also indicate what these sizes should be.

As a general rule of thumb the larger the model the easier it is for everyone. It will be easier to build and detail to make it look realistic and it should be easier to film as supports will be more substantial and the camera will be able to get in closer without spoiling the illusion. Invariably, however, a compromise has to be reached and the average model tends to end up around 3 feet long. For example the largest Eagle models (from *Space 1999*) were this length as was the larger of the two *Liberator* models (*Blake's 7*). *Star Wars'* Imperial Battlecruiser worked out to about this size, as did the original version of the *Millennium Falcon*. There are always exceptions, such as the larger models of the *Valley Forge* from *Silent Running* and *2001's Discovery*.

Whatever the final scale, once decided the construction itself can be turned to and the headaches begin. It is at this stage that all the working features — lights, suspension points and mounting brackets — have to be incorporated to make the building as simple as possible and — if changes have to be made while filming (eg changing from a hanging situation to a fixed mount) — that these can take place in the shortest length of time. Filming is expensive! It is also wise to ensure that working components, be it motors or lights, are access ole. There is nothing

**It is wise to ensure that working components are accessible.**

more annoying than to discover a bulb has blown and you have to practically destroy the model to renew it as it has been sealed in! (I know, it's happened to me!)

The actual building of the models is very much a "one off" prototype business, although occasionally there are opportunities for mass production.

Large models still tend to be built up over a wooden frame with plastic sheets forming an outer covering. Wood is relatively light and convenient to work with and is an easy material to bond, whether this be via screws or glue. It is also adaptable, which is particularly useful if one is designing as one is going along — not an unknown occurrence!

The wooden frame approach is most useful where the final shape is regular. Where the design consists of complicated shapes with compound curves, the building will be made considerably easier by moulding.

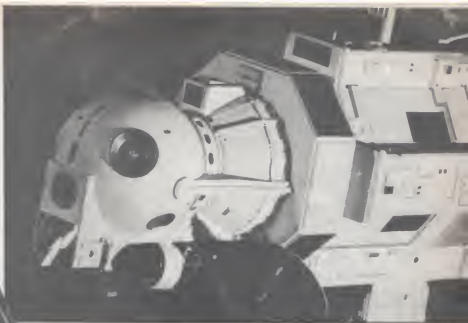
For moulding of any type, an original is required. If we stay with spacehip

**Large models still tend to be built up over a wooden frame with plastic sheets forming an outer covering.**

design, the largest single part of the whole will probably be the main body or hull. This can be built up as an original by carving wood or shaping clay or even in some cases, cutting up block expanded polystyrene. The mould is applied around the original, the two most common moulding materials being plaster or fibreglass. Both have advantages and disadvantages. Plaster is cheaper and initially easier to use, although the mould can end up extremely heavy. It will also deteriorate

Top left: A *Cylon Raider* model from *Battlestar Galactica*. Far left: one of the pirate ships from the *Glen Larson* movie *Buck Rogers in the 25th Century*. Left: A sleek model passenger ship from the *Gerry Anderson* series, *Joe 90*.

Right: The model of SID (Space Intruder Detector) hovers high above the "Earth". Far right: The special effects team at Gerry Anderson's studio, set up a shot for Thunderbirds (Harry Oakes and Ian Scoones are pictured on the left, Brian Johnson stands second from the right).



rate with time, so if there is any likelihood of it being used again or if several casts are required, a fibre-glass mould is a better bet. Which ever way the mould is made, the final article will usually be taken in fibre-glass. A look at any fibre-glass bodied car will show you what sort of finish you can get with this material.

It is an extremely strong, lightweight material and will take drilling, cutting and sanding very well. Bonding of structures, eg supports, is also very simple as an additional mix of the resin and fibre-glass matting will sandwich any metal or wooden bracket to the whole body. In fact, the only real disadvantage is that it will not dissolve in plastic solvent (although strictly speaking that is an

**Wood is not a forgotten material and is still widely used as an original for moulding, or as the final model itself.**

advantage) and so you cannot glue your plastic kit dressing directly to the surface, instead a contact adhesive has to be used.

A third method of constructing the basic body is to build it up from existing parts. These can range from purpose-made plastic parts for supplying spheres, tubes and girderwork in general to commercial plastic items such as flower-pots, trays, boxes, plumbing fittings, vases, even hair-drier bodies, all of which can be adapted and disguised into other, more extraterrestrial, objects.

Wood is not a forgotten material and is still widely used either as an original for moulding, or as the final model itself. Balsa and obechi are well known as hobby materials, but more useful are harder woods, especially a patternmakers'



Above: One of Brian Johnson's highly detailed models from Space: 1999.



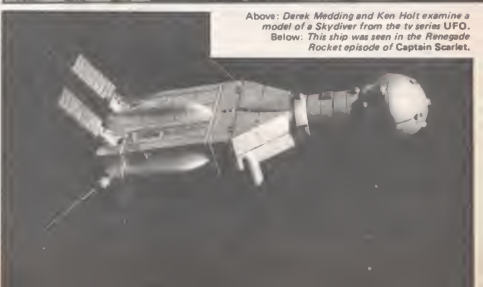
wood called jelutong. This carves equally easily along or across the grain, it sands beautifully and needs very little filling. Obviously using a wooden block as a model basis has limitations. For example lights will be difficult to fit, but for, say, co-starring roles, a jelutong model is a fairly quick method.

Besides being used to make a negative mould, an original can also be vacuum-formed. Vac-forming involves heating a sheet of thin material, usually some type of plastic, and stretching it over the original, pulling it into the shape by evacuating the air. Here you end up with a copy that is fractionally larger than the original and has the detail pushed through more popular where a number of especially used where a number of background craft are required, or where the craft will be blown up or crashed. The same method can be used to make large numbers of control room panels which do not need too much detail, or miniature cities. (Vacuum-forming can also be done into a negative mould and this is the normal method for producing the commercial vac-formed kits.)

However, it is finally formed, once the basic shape of the craft has taken shape, the business of dressing the model can begin. Ever since 2001, the busy look of craft has been copied and echoed by virtually all sf films and tv series. Here is where the commercial kit market comes into its own, for it would be impossible — or at least extremely expensive and time consuming — to manufacture from scratch all those tiny bits and pieces which are the hallmark of any recent ship. The kits, and they need not necessarily be restricted to space items, provide a vital service in this stage of the model-making, but they do need to be applied with some semblance of logic. Actually, in the final stages of construction, the model tends to end up as a mess — or at least initially — for invariably the completed, but unpainted, model will be a mass of colours resulting from all the



Above: Derek Medding and Ken Holt examine a model of a Skydiver from the tv series UFO.  
Below: This ship was seen in the Renegade Rocket episode of Captain Scarlet.



different kits being used. However, a coat of paint works wonders in pulling everything together and one starts to see some amazing effects once that first coat is applied. Even the most outlandish of dressing parts soon blends in with the overall look and becomes an integral part of the whole shape.

**Exactly why a clean model looks wrong and a dirty model looks right is something I have never been able to fathom. Logically, a deep space craft will not get dirty — there is no dirt in space.**

Because in most instances the finished craft is finally seen against the black of space, the top coat invariably is some light colour, white or grey being the favourites, although some very effective finishes have been seen using colours not normally associated with such vehicles, yellow, red and blue for example.

The final task on present day space miniatures is in many ways the most difficult. It is the applying of the final details, panel lines, small touches of paint, markings; all the little items that turn it from a model into the real thing. It is not as straightforward as it looks. People tend to think that a few lines here and there, plus a splotch of black paint will do but the task is a lot more time-consuming than that and can take longer than the main construction. Panel lines can be drawn on, using a ruler and pencil or a felt-tip pen. In addition thicker lines can come from the many types of graphic lining tape available. (Letroset, Brady or Chartpak are examples). An air-brush is an invaluable tool in this final detailing, although a spray gun is useful for larger areas. Masks of card or plastic, perhaps with a pattern cut are used to obtain varying shades as if panels were of different materials.

The model, having been completed to your satisfaction, needs one last task — dirtying down! Exactly why a clean model looks wrong and a dirty model looks right is something I have never been able to fathom. Logically, a deepspace craft will not get dirty — there is no dirt in space! But even so, spacecraft still look wrong when clean. Perhaps it is through likening them to terrestrial craft (which tend to be battered by the elements) that we cannot accept that a spaceship should be any different.

Basic dirt can come from a spray can of matt black paint, although a mixture of blacks, browns and greys is more effective. Powder paint in the same colours is also useful, applied with a puffer. Detailed dirtying is best done with an air-brush, with particular attention being applied to the engine areas (if the craft has them).

Normally most miniatures used in film and television work look horribly dirty and grubby to the naked eye, but it all works as far as the camera is concerned; even if everyone gets just as horribly dirty and grubby during the actual filming.

Miniature spaceships are not just basic shapes and detailing, in most cases additional features are fitted.

The duplication of rocket engines in miniatures invariably causes a controversy. The Thunderbirds craft lifted off accompanied by a blast of smoke and flame that tended to obliterate the whole picture. In the Thunderbirds context I found this acceptable, but if we are dealing with a "real" situation, the flames always tend to look wrong. Present day technology indicates that deepspace craft will have engines that burn with very little flame, almost all you get is a haze. Consequently modern films, and tv, turn to using very bright lights, bluish in tinge, coupled with a blast of air. For the latter a pressurised fire extinguisher is effective, perhaps used with a small amount of very fine powder added along the way. A similar effect can be achieved with an air canister sold for running air-brushes and the like, and these work best upside-down.

**Another major problem is providing your ship with illumination. Enough light to film by will usually drown out any lights on the craft, so low power tungsten bulbs or LED (Light Emitting Diodes) are out.**

Another major problem is providing your ship with illumination. Enough light to film by will usually drown out any lamps on the craft, so low power tungsten bulbs or LEDs (Light Emitting Diodes) are out. Invariably the only things that show up are over-run ordinary, tungsten, bulbs (which of course have the danger of blowing with monotonous regularity) or the newer type of quartz iodine (QI) bulb. These days they are even available in 6 volt versions and will if necessary, run from a pack of Mercury Alkaline (Duracell-type) AA size batteries, although a heavier power supply is recommended. (A 10 watt, 6 volt QI will, in an emergency, run off an equivalent pack of ordinary zinc carbon batteries, but they practically melt in the process. I know, I've been through this one as well!)

Of course if you can get a suitable cable to the model, mains current or greater, can be used. This will get round the "not-enough-volts" problem, but has the added danger of the high current. Sometimes it is worth the risk as one

275 watt photo flood bulb is worth a dozen low-voltage QIs. In extreme cases the voltage is very high indeed as was the case with the lighting effects required for the Close Encounters Skyharbour Mothership.

However, you do not have to put lights in the model itself to make it look as if it is internally illuminated. By

**Mechanical systems are a complete field by themselves and movement for the models can range from the simplest action to the most complicated of devices.**

sticking pieces of the highly reflective screen material used for Front Axial Projection screens onto the model in the positions of the windows and by shining a relatively low intensity lamp down the axis of the camera, the craft will appear to be internally illuminated.

Fibre optics are a further alternative and one bulb, conveniently positioned, can supply illumination to a whole craft. "Spaceworld" from the Blake's 7 story *Redemption* was lit in this manner.

Mechanical systems are a complete field by themselves and movement for the models can range from the simplest action via a piece of nylon line to the most complicated of electro-mechanical devices.

As far as surface movement is concerned, if the model can be made to move by pulling it on a length of fishing line, pull it on a length of fishing line, it is far more reliable. Resort to motors after having discarded the pulling method and only resort to radio control if absolutely necessary. Unfortunately, however reliable modern electronic equipment is — and it is — the more there is to go wrong the more will go wrong. If the line breaks it is usually quite easy to replace it!

Detailed movement on the craft will not normally be done with the main model. If, say, the undercarriage is required to retract or a gun mounting revolve, a separate miniature will be built and used for the close-ups. This is where the skills of the film editor are required to fit this sequence smoothly into the whole.

So there, very simply, it is. One realistic miniature spacecraft — detailed, painted and lit. All (I) that is now required is to consign that image to film or tape, and some of the ways that can be done will be examined next month. ●

Opposite above: One of Brian Johnson's models from *Space: 1999*. Opposite below: An example of vac-forming in model-work, the "colony" from *Space: 1999*.



